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ISSUE 287 AUGUST 2023 £6.95

jazzwise

ZOE RAHMAN
Rainbows Of Sound

Call Cobbs
Albert Ayler's harpsichord hero

Mark Lewandowski
Heralds Billie Holiday

COLTRANE & DOLPHY
Behind the Lost Village Gate recordings

Jay Phelps
Soulful Endeavours

Mark Guiliana
On *A Love Supreme*

PLUS:
- Tom Ollendorff
- Marianne Windham
- Nigel Aubrey Thomas
- Polly Gibbons Takes Five

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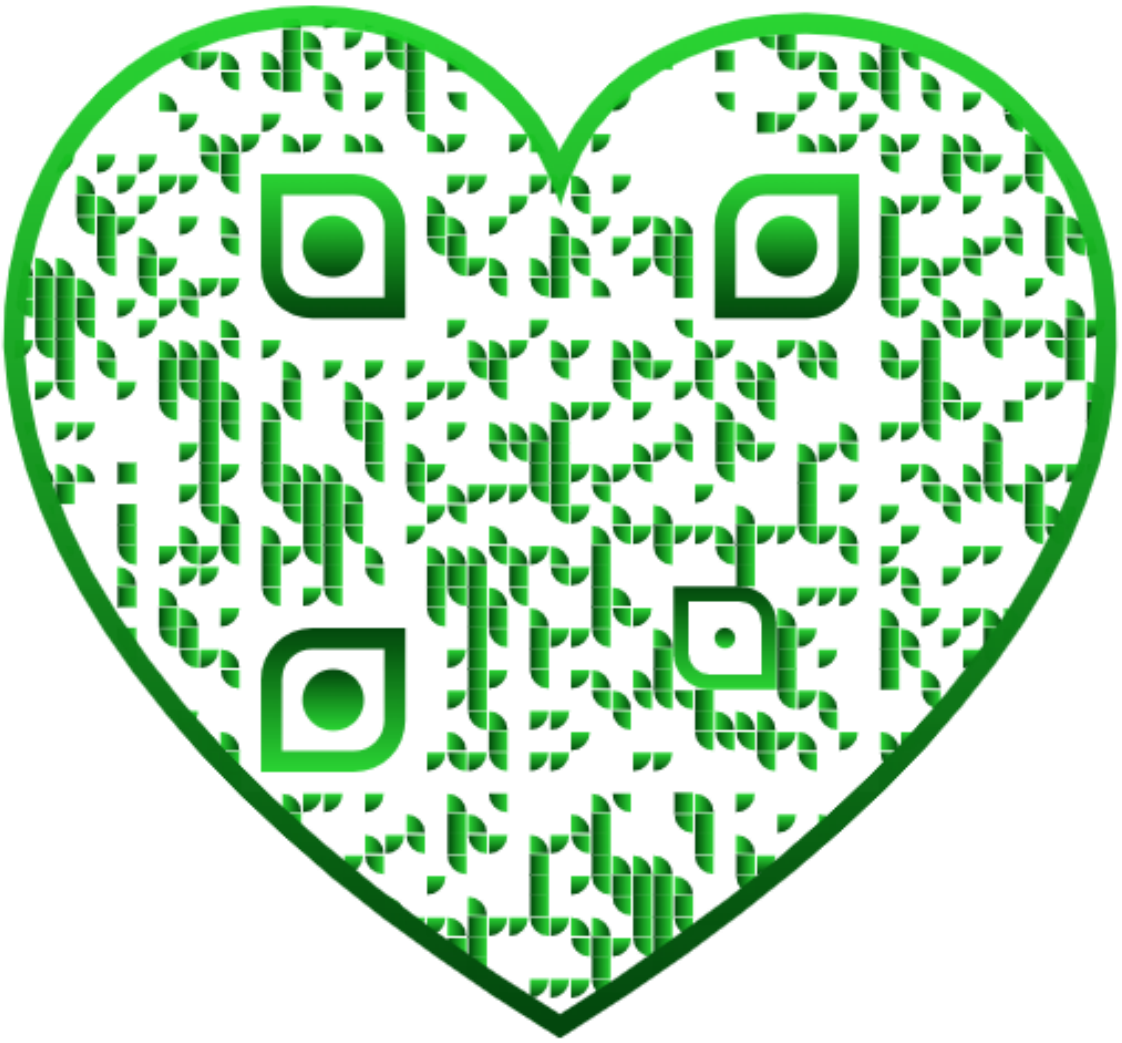

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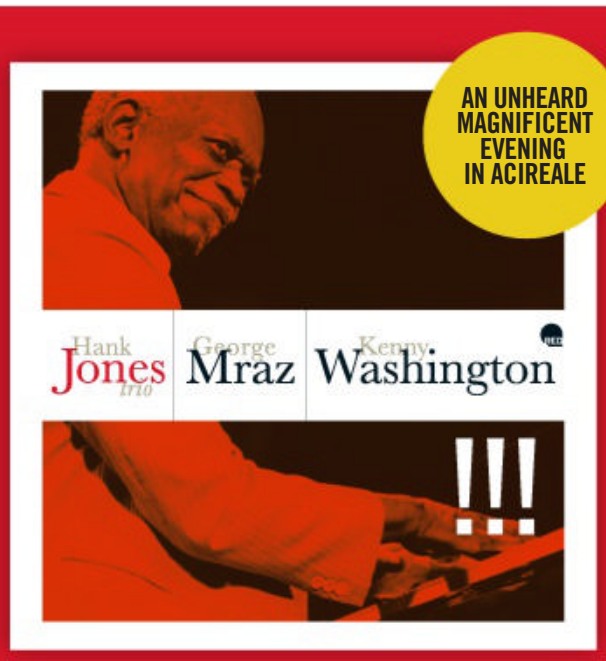

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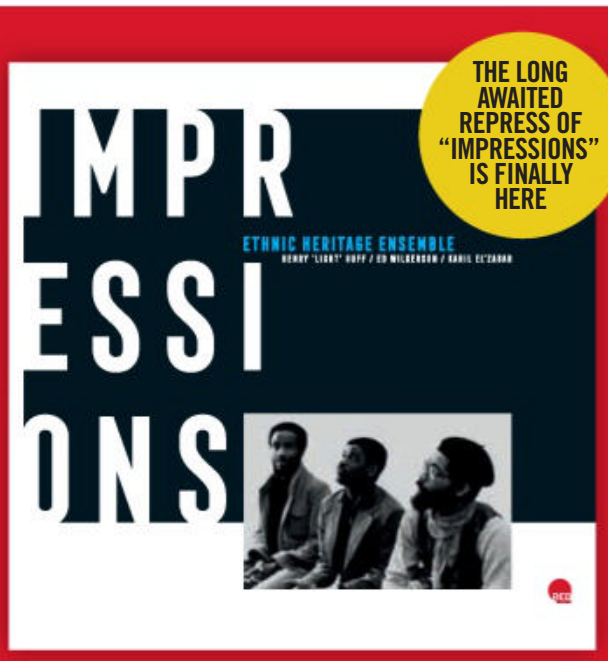

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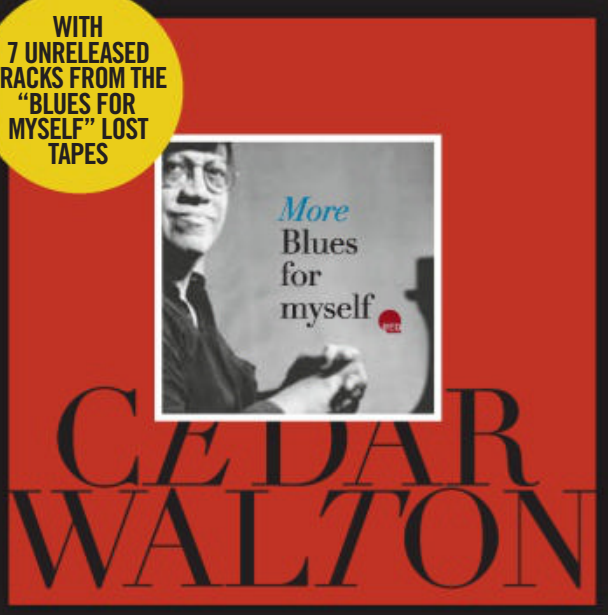

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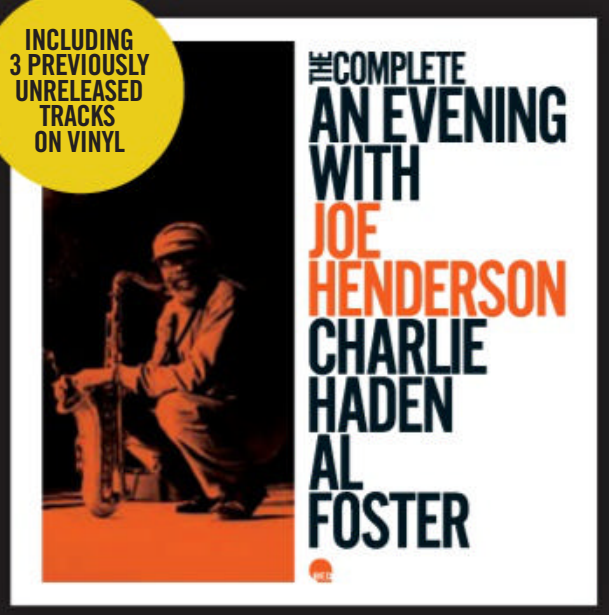

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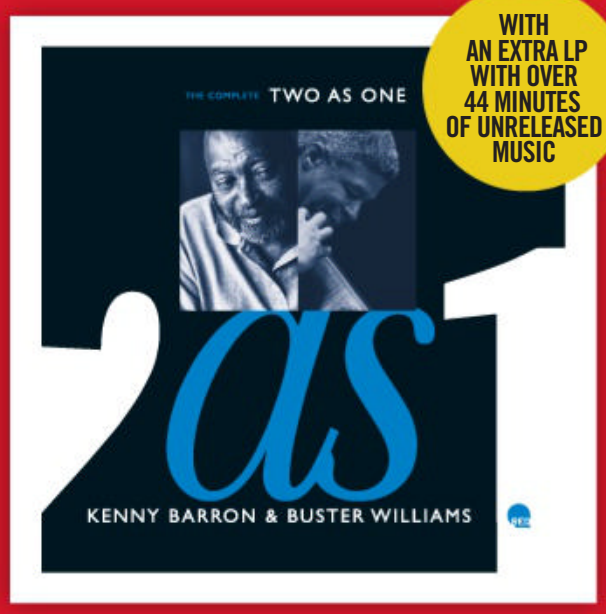

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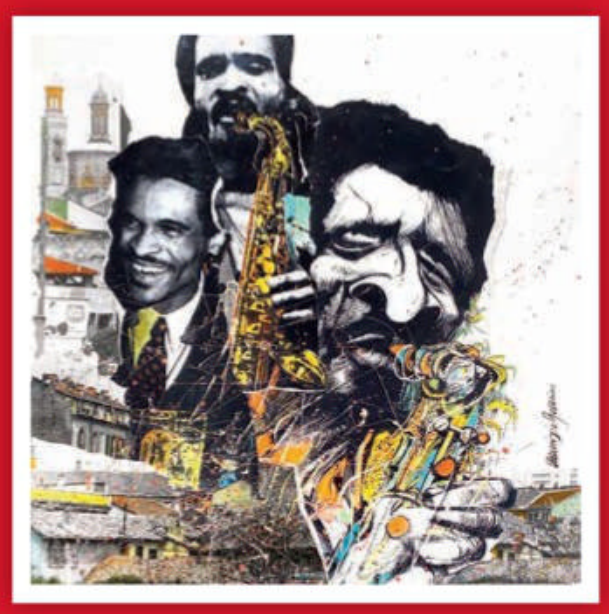

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Photo: Carl Russ-Mohl

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News

By Mike Flynn, Kevin Whitlock and Jon Newey

For the latest breaking news visit **www.jazzwise.com**

China Moses

Peirani, Sissoko, Parisien, Segal

Joshua Redman

Joshua Redman Super-Band, Rob Luft and China Moses added to EFG London Jazz Fest

This year's EFG London Jazz Festival, which runs from 10 to 19 November at venues, across the capital for 10 days and nights, continues to expand its programme of unique line-ups and collaborations with some eye-catching additions. Leading the pack is US sax star Joshua Redman, who is set to bring his newly-formed Quintet to the Barbican on 12 November. A serial collaborator, Redman's recent announcement that he's signed to Blue Note ushers in a new band of Aaron Parks on piano, Joe Sanders on bass, and Brian Blade on drums, and for the first time in a Redman line-up, a singer, in the form of California-born vocalist-composer of Italian descent, Gabrielle Cavassa. Playing music from his forthcoming Blue Note debut *Where We Are* – which gets its UK premiere here – this already stellar group will also be joined by special guests including trumpeter Nicholas Payton, contemporary jazz guitar greats Kurt Rosenwinkel and Peter Bernstein, and vibes virtuoso Joel Ross.

Another exciting prospect is the meeting between Malian kora luminary Ballaké Sissoko, and a trio of top French jazz musicians including cellist Vincent Segal, accordionist Vincent Peirani and sax firebrand Émile Parisien, when they bring music from their recent album *Les Egarés*, to the stage of Cadogan Hall on 15 November. The London Symphony Orchestra are getting in on the cultural crossing too, as conductor Duncan Ward leads them through a special concert with South African cellist/singer/percussionist Abel Selaocoe. For this concert, dubbed 'A World of Possibilities – Duncan Ward & Abel Selaocoe' (Barbican, 16 Nov), Selaocoe performs his much-anticipated cello concerto, 'Four Spirits', as well music by Béla Bartók, and British composer Gary Carpenter.

Kings Place hosts trumpeter Yazz Ahmed linking up with multi-instrumentalist/producer Hector Plimmer and vibes player Ralph Wyld to explore the more experimental, electronica-infused side of her music (Hall Two, 12 Nov). San Francisco-based guitarist and composer Bill Orcutt presents his latest project, an all-electric guitar quartet performing the music from his 2022 LP *Music for Four Guitars*, with an all-star team of guitarists: Orcutt, Wendy Eisenberg, Ava Mendoza, and Shane Parish (15 Nov). Former Sons of Kemet drummer Tom Skinner performs with his jazz-centric Voices of Bishara project (15 Nov). Finally, Parisian soul/jazz diva China Moses makes her Kings Place debut in an evening combining new work with music from the acclaimed *Nightintales* album (18 Nov).

Another symphonic jazz concert to look out for is guitarist Rob Luft's appearance with composer Miho Hazama and the BBC Concert Orchestra for 'Jazz Then and Now', a personal journey into their shared jazz roots. (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 16 Nov).

And rounding out these additions to the programme comes US saxophonist James Brandon Lewis, who appears with his heavyweight Quartet of pianist Aruán Ortiz, bassist Brad Jones and drummer Chad Taylor for what's sure to be an all-encompassing set of music from his lauded recent album, *Code of Being* (Cafe OTO, 19 Nov).

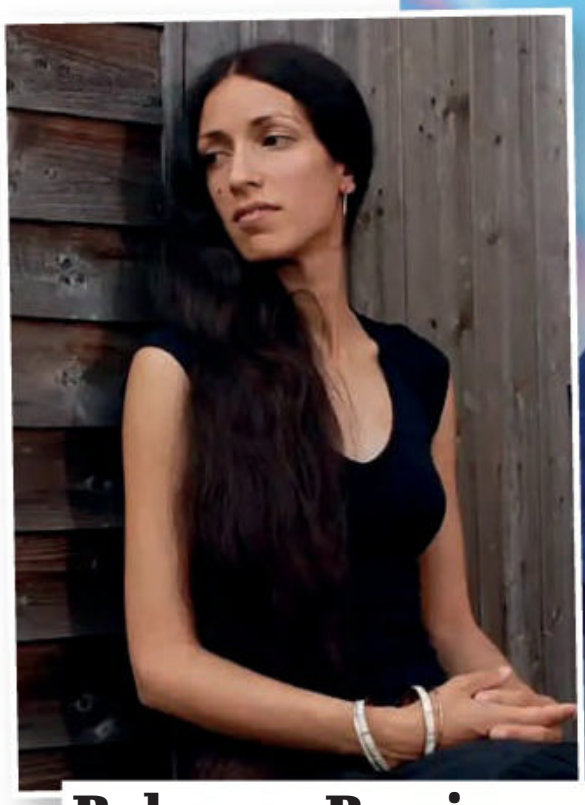
Jazzwise is festival media partner.

For more info and full listings so far announced visit www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

Go west! Kinch, Cherise and Millar head for Ealing

That ever-popular West London jazz weekender, the Ealing Jazz Festival, returns this summer at Walpole Park on 29 and 30 July with top names from the UK jazz and soul scenes. Headlining the main stage on Saturday will be Jazz FM Award-winning singer Mica Millar, with vocalist Cherise (left), saxophonist Jasmine Myra, singer Amber Simone, funky band Yaatri and vibrant Brazilian jazz band Baiana also on the bill. Double bassist Fergus Quill gets things underway the following day with his Trio, with further performances from nine-piece collective Brass Funkeys, jazz guitarist Edison Herbert, award-winning flautist Keith Waithe and his band The Macusi Players, saxophonist/rapper Soweto Kinch and the groove-heavy collective Steam Down complete the bill. There's also a wealth of talent playing on the South Stage all weekend including such names as Sokkyo, Kaida Akinnibi, Theo Bard, Mama Sutra, Granfergo, Imperio Bamba, Triana Y Hermana Juana and more.

www.ealingsummerfestivals.com



Rahman, Rawicz and Crosby line up for Brecon Jazz Fest 40

The Brecon Beacons will once again come alive to an eclectic range of high-calibre UK and international names who descend on the picturesque locale in Powys, mid Wales for this summer's 40th anniversary edition of the Brecon Jazz Festival.

Taking place over three weekends, things get underway on 6 August with Jazz in the Marquee – Family Jazz & Dance Day, with performances from Rachel Hayward's Swing Quartet, Fiesta Resistance and the 10-piece Funkyard led by young saxophonist Maddie Penfold, all at the Showground Marquee. This is followed by the main festival weekend that runs from 11 to 13 August with a wide spectrum of jazz sounds at the town's central venue, Theatr Brycheiniog, as well as Brecon Cathedral, St Mary's Church, Castle Hotel, and Brecon Guildhall with some gigs livestreamed via the festival's digital partner, Vialma.

Programme highlights include the All Stars of Brecon Jazz featuring vocalist Laura Collin, tenorist Jo Fooks and trumpeter Chris Hodgkins, while rising saxophonist Emma Rawicz appears with a top-notch trio of bassist Gary Brunton, pianist Gareth Williams and drummer Liz Exell (both gigs at Guildhall, 12 Aug). Bass ace Gary Crosby and his Trio collaborate with much-admired jazz tap dancer Annette Walker for a special performance (St Mary's, 12 Aug), and the Castle Hotel presents the guitar-led Edison Herbert Quartet featuring Terence Collie (keys), Neville Malcolm (bass guitar) and Cheryl Alleyne (drums) plus leading US singer LaVon Hardison with the Glen Manby Quartet (both on 11 Aug). Hardison also appears with the Festival Big Band conducted by Gareth Roberts at Theatr Brycheiniog (13 Aug). New names to look out for include pianist Eddie Gripper who appears with his Trio of bassist Ursula Harrison and drummer Patrick Barrett-Donlon (The Muse, 13 Aug), while trombonist Antigone 'Tiggy' Blackwell performs with the New Orleans Jazz Quintet (St Mary's, 11 Aug).

The final weekend of 19-20 August includes a mix of jazz film screenings (TBA) and performances from groups such as Hot Club Gallois and Baires Connection Tango Trio featuring pianist Julieta Iglesias. The anniversary event closes in emphatic style with top UK pianist (and this month's cover star) Zoe Rahman and her Octet, which includes flautist Rowland Sutherland, trumpeter Alex Ridout, alto saxophonist Helena Kay, tenorist Tori Freestone, trombonist Rosie Turton, bassist Alec Dankworth and drummer Gene Calderazzo, all playing music from Rahman's new album *Colour Of Sound* (Theatr Brycheiniog, 20 Aug).

Full details at www.breconjazz.org

Editor's Note

Jazz always carries the weight of its own history – and anyone who plays it knows it's not just a technical challenge, but a personal mission to overcome the vastness of the music and make it your own. This month's issue has some illuminating insights into this process from our cover star, the talented Zoe Rahman.

As a fully independent artist she continues to rise above the challenge of not just creating and releasing her own highly intricate and passionately executed music, but combines that with motherhood too. As any parent also knows, this often requires those immense, frequently unsung, superpowers just to get you through the day! And while we may put the likes of Coltrane and Dolphy on a pedestal as jazz icons, they too were approaching their music from an equally earthy point of view, grappling with how to channel their life experiences into creating something transcendent.

It's exploring those human vulnerabilities that can transform the everyday into high art.

Mike Flynn, Editor, *Jazzwise*

Brit-Jazz 45s series unites new bands with old tunes for new 7" vinyl singles

UK imprint My Only Desire Records (MODR) has come up with an inspired idea to introduce the riches of the Brit-Jazz canon to new audiences, with their Brit Jazz 45s series. This sees contemporary jazz acts record two 1960s/70s British jazz compositions apiece and present them as limited-edition vinyl 7" singles. The series gets underway with saxophonist/composer Kevin Figes and his group You Are Here, paying homage to two revered Brit jazz musicians – Keith Tippett and Elton Dean – with newly-minted recordings of a classic track from each.

Figes' group, You Are Here, grew out of a celebration of the life of late, great pianist/composer Keith Tippett, who died in 2020, and with whom Figes recorded and performed with. The fine band features Figes on soprano/alto sax, trumpeter Pete Judge, trombonist Raphael Clarkson, pianist Jim Blomfield, bassist Riaan Vosloo and drummer Tony Orrell and collectively they attack the material with the free-flowing, energetic spirit of 1960s Brit jazz.

The 'A' side features a piece by Figes' former teacher – and Soft Machine member – saxophonist/composer Elton Dean (1945-2006) with the Township-jazz invoking composition 'Seven for Lee', which sees Figes' soprano and Clarkson's trombone whipping up a solo storm over the unfettered rhythm section. The flip side dives into cosmic jazz-rock territory on Tippett's expansive 'Green and Orange Night Park', with pianist Blomfield hammering the keys under the horn-laden intro which then morphs into an elongated loping groove.

Future singles will feature the likes of Soft Machine, Ruby Rushton and Beats & Pieces Big Band who are lined up to participate, with all tracks to be part of a compilation album at the end of the series.

www.myonlydesirerecords.com

Aussie upstarts Brekky Boy to fly in for debut UK live dates

Sydney-based trio Brekky Boy are set to visit the UK for the first time following a run of international appearances at SXSW, Montreux and Jazzahead, which have garnered praise and a rapidly growing fanbase. Consisting of bandleader keyboardist Taylor Davis, bass guitarist Ryan Hurst and drummer Alex Hirlian, the trio mix lyrical melodies, hard-hitting polyrhythms, EST/Tigran-style progressive grooves and no shortage of Aussie humour that frequently sees them dropping in 'twisted quotes' from Toto's 'Africa' and Luther Vandross' 'Never Too Much'.

Completely independent and self-managed with no label or booking agent, the band continue to be booked for major festivals with August dates including shows in Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, Serbia and the UK. Their next album is due for release this autumn and is preceded by their latest single, 'Blue Cow'. Catch the band on the following UK dates: 91 Living Room, London (16 August), Band on the Wall, Manchester (17 Aug) and a London show in November that's soon to be confirmed (visit website for updates).

www.brekkyboy.com

Matana Roberts announces new LP *Coin Coin Chapter Five: In the Garden...* and UK concerts

Composer, saxophonist, bandleader and visual artist Matana Roberts is set to release her new album *Coin Coin Chapter Five: In the Garden...* on 29 September via Canadian imprint CST. The fifth instalment of her vast project exploring African-American history through ancestry, archive and place, the album weaves together elements of jazz, avant-garde composition, folk and spoken word, as Roberts tells the story of an ancestor, a woman "who died following complications from an illegal abortion".

At a time when reproductive rights are under attack in the US, Roberts explains how this influenced the music: "I wanted to talk about this issue, but in a way where she gets some sense of liberation, to create a portrait of a woman who is, as the lyrics put it, electric, alive, spirited, fire and free."

The album features Roberts and fellow alto saxophonist Darius Jones, alongside violinist Mazz Swift, bass clarinettist Stuart Bogie, alto clarinettist Matt Lavelle, pianist Cory Smythe, vocalist/actor Gitanjali Jain and percussionists Ryan Sawyer and Mike Pride. The album is produced by TV On The Radio's Kyp Malone, who also contributes synths.

Ahead of the album's release Roberts visits the UK for three dates as part of her European tour – performing in a duo at Moment's Notice, Amp Studios, Old Kent Road, London (31 August); solo at the Old Hairdressers, Glasgow (2 Sept); and a special audio-visual performance of *Coin Coin Chapter Three* at Birmingham's Supersonic Festival (3 Sept).

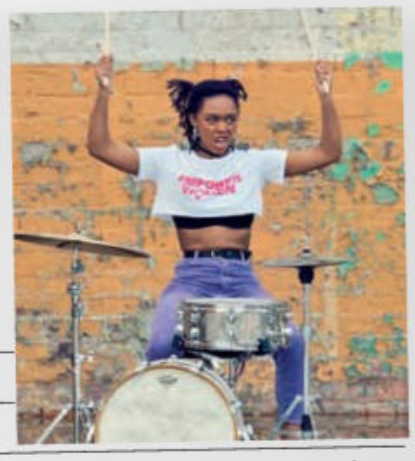
For more info visit www.matanaroberts.com

BACK IN THE DAY...

Liverpool's Cavern Club was the city's go-to jazz venue from the late 1950s, having been opened in 1957 by promoter Alan Synter in an old barrel-ceilinged warehouse basement at 10 Mathew Street, modelled on Le Caveau jazz club in Paris. However, by 1961 the packed-out jazz nights were being challenged on Merseyside by the growing rock'n'roll scene erupting from the city's numerous dance halls. New Cavern boss Ray McFall reluctantly withdrew the club's ban on rock'n'roll and slowly began to embrace the beat-group boom, which coincided with the launch of *Merseybeat*, a fortnightly music paper where the Cavern advertised one of its infamous all-nighters on Saturday, 5 August 1961. Topped by the Panama Jazzmen, Kenny Ball's Jazzmen and Mike Cotton's Jazzmen (Trad was such a male thing!), further down the bill are The Beatles, then unknown outside Liverpool but already sounding the death-knell for Trad, prior to releasing their first single, Love Me Do' in October 1962. The Sixties were about to swing, but not in a jazz sense! **Jon Newey**

FUTURE *MOVERS*

Highlighting serious talent now bubbling under the radar....



NAME: Romarna Campbell

INSTRUMENT: Drums

EXPERIENCE:

Romarna is a drummer, producer and composer whose nomadic spirit lives in her jazz, electronic and hip-hop infused music. Her 2020 single 'Inherently Political' saw DJ Jamz Supernova crown her 'New Name of the Week' and was followed by her debut album *25 Songs for My 25th Birthday* featuring Soweto Kinch, Tomeka Reid, Sumi Tonooka and Lady Sanity. She's worked alongside Billy Childs, Courtney Pine and Denys Baptiste and has had high-calibre mentors including Gary Crosby, Terri Lyne Carrington and Neal Smith.

THIS FUTURE MOVER SAYS:

"My approach to playing is very much that of a conversation and pushing boundaries! I enjoy that I can communicate within the context of a band and create conversations that can only happen within the realm of improvisation. In the future, I would love to work with Georgia Anne Muldrow, Karriem Riggins and Kris Bowers, artists who are incredible innovators and musical explorers. I would love the opportunity to be a part of their creative process. Without music, I wouldn't be where I am and who I am today. It has the true power to transform, inform and empower!"

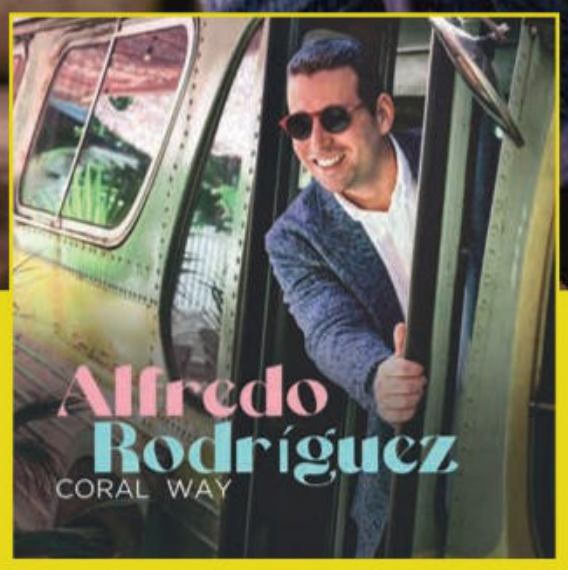
See Romarna Campbell play Ronnie Scott's Future Movers Late Shows on 4th and 5th August – for more info visit www.ronniescotts.co.uk

"ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC AND GIFTED JAZZ PIANISTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY"
— QUINCY JONES

"RODRIGUEZ IS WELL ON HIS WAY TO BECOMING A SUPERSTAR."
— HOT HOUSE

ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ

PHOTO: GABRIELA GABRIELAA



Alfredo Rodriguez's new album, ***Coral Way***, embodies the sound of Miami: a melding of the Latin Pop, Timba, Salsa, Bachata, Tango, Reggaeton and Bolero that permeate the city's diverse community of Latinos living together while individually sharing their unique musical backgrounds from their cultural regions. ***Coral Way***, which features guest vocalists **Cimafunk** and **Alana Sinkëy**, serves as the connective tissue between these worlds – an artistic statement for the diverse Latin community to feel seen, heard and take pride in their history while creating a path forward of individuality through community.

"BROMBERG IS UNJUSTLY PEGGED AS A 'SMOOTH JAZZ' ARTIST. INSTEAD, HE SHOULD BE KNOWN AS THE GUY WHO PLAYS JAZZ SMOOTHLY, AND THEREBY CREATING ALL OF THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD."
— JAZZ WEEKLY

"DETAILED SONIC ARTISTRY AND SUPERIOR TECHNICAL CHOPS ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY … HE OFTEN GOES OFF ON QUICKSILVER RUNS THAT BOGGLE THE MIND."
— THE TIMES

BRIAN BROMBERG

PHOTO: RAJ NAIK

Guided by the music, **Brian Bromberg** crafts a spirited new set of contemporary jazz tunes that foreground vibe and soulfulness rather than aggressive virtuosity. ***The Magic of Moonlight*** is an apt title for this evocative piece of work which is deeply imbued with the shadow-cloaked mystery and twilight romance of an evening under the full moon.

Polly Gibbons TAKES 5

The vocalist selects the five albums she can't live without

1 *Lady in Satin* by Billie Holiday (1958)
"The first time jazz came into my consciousness was hearing 'I'm a Fool to Want You', from this record. I was about 14 years old, and my sister was playing the vinyl in her room. I remember her emotional intensity grabbed me immediately and made me wonder what type of music this was, and it opened up a massive new world of expression to me. I found the beautiful and lush arrangements alongside her broken voice very moving."

2 *Prince* by Prince (1979)
"Picking one Prince album is really tough, as they all have brilliant tunes and extraordinary versatility and surprise in them. But I picked this classic as the front cover is so hilarious! Ha! Joke. 'I Feel For You' and 'I Wanna Be Your Lover' are super funky and I like the innocence of this record and his unashamed vulnerability on it."

3 *Kenny Kirkland* by Kenny Kirkland (1991)
"The excellent British musician Benet McLean introduced me to this album and this artist. Its 1980s keyboard sounds took me a moment to get into, but after I did, I quickly came to love his innovative and unique playing, it's really progressive, playful and his tune 'Steepian Faith' swings!! Courtesy of Jeff Watts, no doubt. But I think Kenny is woefully underrated. "

4 *Gospels, Hymns and Spirituals* by Mahalia Jackson (1991)
"She is a deeply earnest singer. It feels as though she just sings from deep in her soul – straight, no frills and with great sincerity. I grew up in a different kind of Baptist church in Suffolk, and so many of these hymns I remember from my childhood, but these versions of them are better. The Hammond organ, the powerful voices in harmony, the blues, I love it!"

5 *Voodoo* by D'Angelo (2000)
"I heard my older siblings play a lot of early-1990s hip-hop when I was growing up and I grew a taste for a back beat. When this album came out, with real instruments, heavy production, but beautiful songs and melodies, I loved it. There are so many groovy tunes on this album. I also loved the way D'Angelo used his voice in harmony as part of the song's fabric and arrangement, It wasn't just a top line or call and response backing vocals, they moved over changes too. It was an innovative record which paved the way for a lot of music that is knocking about now."

Polly Gibbons' new album, *As It Is*, is out now and reviewed on page 38

Freestone and Mick return with *Make One Little Room An Everywhere*

The Ivor Novello Award-winning duo of saxophonist Tori Freestone and pianist Alcyona Mick return with their second album as a duo, *Make One Little Room An Everywhere*, this September, along with some UK live dates. First forming their duo in 2015 after being invited to perform together at the Manchester Jazz Festival, the pair have toured extensively and released their debut LP, *Criss Cross*, in 2017. The new album draws on a diverse set of influences including English folk, Brazilian, Arabic, free playing, Monk and more, with two special guest vocalists in the form of Brigitte Beraha and Natacha Atlas. The award-winning Beraha is featured on a spellbinding rendition of Joni Mitchell's 'Both Sides Now', while the internationally-acclaimed Atlas lends her beguiling voice to the haunting Arabic-infused 'Who We Are Now'. The duo play the following UK dates: The Forge, London (24 Aug); and Scarborough Jazz Festival (22-23 Sept)

linktr.ee/torifreestone_alcyonamick_duo

70 YEARS AGO – Bud Powell

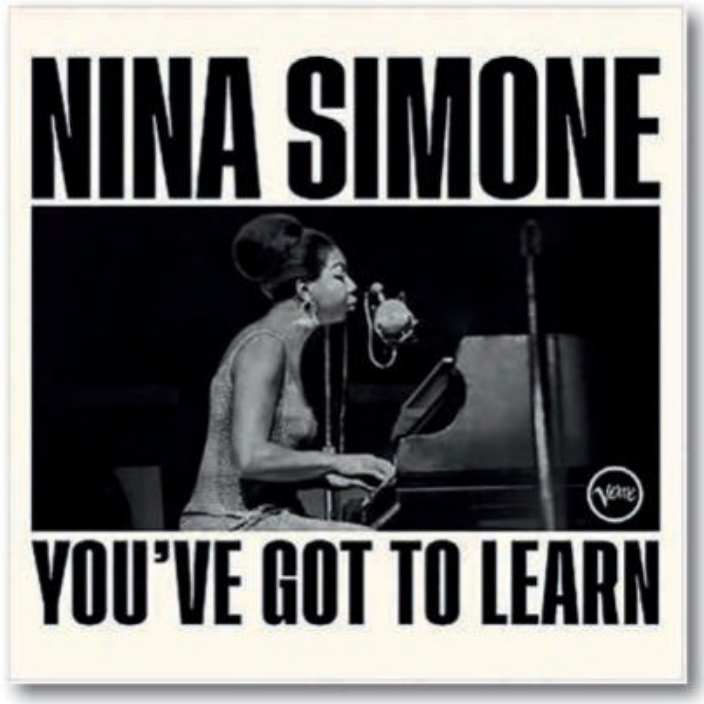
It's been said before that Bud Powell is by far the most ignored of the early bebop pioneers. Partly because, instead of being an attention-getting hornman, he sat at the piano. But, when you hear of certain live situations where he was more exciting and more intensely creative than Charlie Parker, you know something was going on. Unfortunately, his career and his playing had definite ups and downs, and his early death at age 41 didn't lead to regular re-evaluation of his best work.

By the start of 1953, he had not recorded for nearly two years and, only after his release from hospital, he was signed to a flagrantly one-sided contract to appear nightly at NYC's Birdland club, from which some broadcasts have survived, as of course did the Massey Hall concert with Parker and Gillespie.

However, his return to Blue Note's studio on 14 August contains some extraordinary music, from bebop tunes by Benny Harris and Oscar Pettiford to three standards and three varied originals.

The quirkily repetitive, disguised blues of 'Audrey' (his new wife, actually a Birdland-appointed 'minder') evokes an explosive but discontinuous solo, while 'Sure Thing' – usually mis-credited as Jerome Kern's song of the same name – is his intricate, pseudo-baroque composition in straight time, with only eight bars of improvisation. Its classical allusions are still conventional compared to the famous 'Glass Enclosure', whose title allegedly refers to his stay in hospital, and it's more akin to a menacing tone-poem, the opening polytonal chords being way ahead of their time. The whole thing has three sections and four interludes, no improvisation and lasts only 2'21", but is unlike anything else in recorded music. **Brian Priestley**

Verve to release Nina Simone's 1966 Newport live recording for the first time on CD and LP



As part of its year-long celebration of Nina Simone's 90th birthday, Verve Records and parent company UMe have announced the release of *You've Got To Learn*, a newly-discovered recording of Simone's performance at the 1966 Newport Jazz Festival, set for release on 21 July. The album will be available on CD, LP and download/streaming; there's also a limited edition cream-coloured vinyl LP version.

The first single from *You've Got To Learn* is out now: an impassioned take on Nina's celebrated protest song 'Mississippi Goddam'.

Simone performed a six-song set at Newport on 2 July 1966, a performance which has gone down in the annals of the festival's history, but which has been unreleased – and unheard by those who weren't present on the day – until now. According to the press blurb, the new recording "captures the essence of Simone's performance, showcasing both her vocal/pianistic range and her ability to connect with her audience". Liner notes for the album are provided by Shana L Redmond, a respected scholar and author who has written extensively on Simone's life and legacy.

Tracklisting is as follows: 'You've Got To Learn'; 'I Loves You, Porgy'; 'Blues For Mama'; 'Be My Husband'; 'Mississippi Goddam' and 'Music For Lovers'. Accompanying Simone (piano, vocals) are: Rudy Stevenson (guitar), Lisle Atkinson (bass) and Bobby Hamilton (drums).

The new album is a completely different release from *Nina Simone at Newport*, which was recorded on 30 June 1960 and issued by Colpix later that year.

Randy Brecker and top UK names for Scarborough 20th anniversary Jazz Festival

The Scarborough Jazz Festival celebrates its 20th anniversary when it returns from 22 to 24 September at its long-established location at Scarborough Spa in North Yorkshire.

Known for its vibrant mix of modern and mainstream jazz, the organisers have confirmed that leading US trumpeter Randy Brecker (right) will appear with San Francisco based jazz saxophonist Tod Dickow and his fusion quartet Charged Particles, best known for their faithful tributes to the music of Randy's late great tenor sax playing brother, Michael Brecker.

Also appearing on the extensive programme of top UK names are harmonica player Adam Glasser's Quartet; saxophonist Alex Clarke's (below) Quartet; An Adventurous Dream featuring Ian Shaw and Tony Kofi; the Art Themen/Dave Barry Quartet; Brandon Allen Groove Band; the Clare Teal Seven; Doncaster Jazz Orchestra: 50th Anniversary; Emma Rawicz Quintet; Graham Costello's STRATA; Ivo Neame's Dodeka; Jamil Sheriff's Five Gold Rings; Jonny Mansfield Quintet; Mark Nightingale/Alan Barnes Sextet; Mighty Like The Blues featuring Jim Mullen; Rory Ingham's Trombone Assembly and Tori Freestone and Alcyona Mick Duo – all of whom will be introduced by festival compere Alan Barnes. Full timings and dates to be announced shortly.

scarboroughspa.co.uk/scarborough-jazz-festival-2023

NEWS IN BRIEF

BERAHA AND BOURNE FOR HARD EDGES SESSIONS

Hard Edges Plus is a new three-part concert series, featuring the improvising brass trio Hard Edges – Chris Dowding (trumpets and flugelhorn), Dave Amis (trombone), and Ben Higham (tuba, trumpet and flugelhorn) – who will be joined by three leading UK improvisers: vocalist Brigitte Beraha, pianist Matthew Bourne and flautist Neil Metcalfe, one at each event held at Anteros Arts Foundation, Norwich.

Embodying decades of creative performance experience and recognising a commitment to improvisation which stems from the emerging scenes in the 1960s to the present day, Hard Edges "explore the sound palette and textures of three brass voices, from dialogue to declamation, incorporating explosive blasts, subtle multiphonics, drones and more". Stemming from long time associations between all six musicians, the trio will provide an evolving soundscape for interaction with these guests, incorporating moments of tenderness, delicacy, ferocity and exultation in these collaborations. Dates are: Hard Edges plus Brigitte Beraha (voice, 28 July); Hard Edges plus Matthew Bourne (piano, 29 Sept) and Hard Edges plus Neil Metcalfe (flute, 24 Nov).

www.anterosfoundation.com

SELECTION OF MCCOY TYNER'S MONTREUX PERFORMANCES OUT NOW!

The Montreux Years live album series continues with release of a double LP set of explosive performances from pianist McCoy Tyner, with nine tracks spanning his festival appearances between 1986 and 2009. The set – which is also released on LP, CD, download and streaming platforms via BMG/Montreux Jazz Festival – delves into Tyner's repertoire with live versions of 1981's 'Eternally Yours' and 'Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit' from his 1973 live album *Enlightenment*. Taken from McCoy's ninth album and his third release on the Blue Note label, there's also a powerhouse performance of 'African Village' and 'Fly with the Wind' from the 1976 album of the same name.

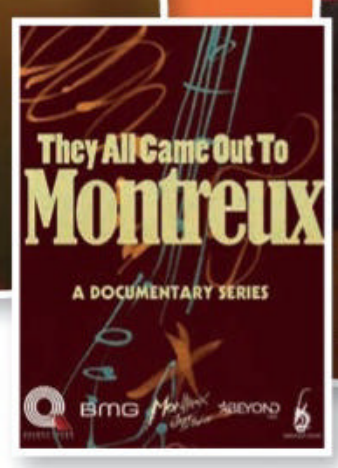
The full track listing is as follows, with the date of each performance at Montreux noted: 'Latino Suite' (1986), 'Eternally Yours' (1981), 'Fly with the Wind' (2009), 'Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit' (1981), 'Ask Me Now' (1986), 'African Village' (2009) and 'Ballad for Aisha' (2009). As with all releases in the series, this new album has been mastered in stunning sound by Tony Cousins at London's renowned Metropolis Studios.

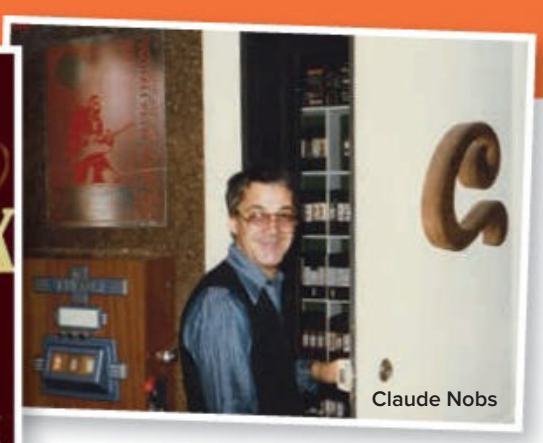
montreuxyears.lnk.to/McCoyTynerIN

Swinging to Swiss Time

Selwyn Harris looks at an enthralling new documentary mini-series on the legendary line-ups of the storied Montreux Jazz Festival

Miles Davis




Claude Nobs

Montreux would very likely have been one of the places you'd least expect to become a hotbed of musical counterculture during the late 1960s-mid 70s. The idyllic village by Lake Geneva is described in *They All Came Out To Montreux*, a three-part documentary broadcast on BBC4 in June and now available on iPlayer, as "beautiful, but so boring" and "quiet with lots of retiring old ladies."

But that was before Montreux Jazz festival. The documentary title not only points to the festival's rich history as an expansive mecca for just about every significant pan-global popular music artist in the mid-late 20th century, but also the key reason for the festival's implausible success: its audacious and visionary founder-director, Claude Nobs. The film's writer-director Oliver Murray focusses our attention on a colourful, eccentric, gregarious and music-crazy entrepreneur who lived his dream, not 'on the road' ie. the Kerouac way, but by luring everybody back to his little hometown. Nobs would transform the area into an international hub for cutting-edge live performance.

Murray specialises in documentaries about music mavericks and in this way it mirrors his excellent 2021 doc *Ronnie's* (*Jazzwise* 256) about Ronnie Scott and last year's *My Life as a Rolling Stone* on Keith Richards. With the aid of interviews recorded during the lockdown with those closest to Nobs – among them regular festival artists and work colleagues – short voiceover edits from interviews, rather than a conveyer-belt of talking heads, are woven together to propel the story along.

Murray told me how the idea for the documentary came about: "In 2019 I was looking to make my first TV series," he says. "So I started to look for a story that works across the length of a mini-series and I felt the evolution of the Montreux Jazz Festival was it. As someone who has worked extensively with archival film material I knew that this was something of a mecca for documentary film makers. With the backing of Quincy Jones, who was the festival's creative director in the 1990s, and Thierry Amsallem, who looks after the Claude Nobs Estate, I was given the keys to something very special".

Nobs had recorded all the concerts since Montreux's opening in 1967, upgrading the technology along the way, and his imposing home tape vaults are central to Episode 2. With such an abundance of riches though, how did Murray make the right selection for the film?

"I thought about the acts that Claude Nobs would have wanted to showcase," says Murray. "So I looked at interviews and diary entries to work out who his favourite musicians were and drew up a long list. Then it was so subjective that I thought I'd throw caution to the wind and just go with personal taste to use the music to tell his story.

"At the end of the day, jazz is inclusive and stands for freedom of expression so I kept that rule of thumb front and centre. The show gives us a history of 20th century music, from Ella Fitzgerald in 1969 to Prince in 2013."

Jazz fans might understandably question Murray's balancing act, but the truth is that Montreux rather quickly became an early model for the typical ultra-diverse programmes offered by today's larger international jazz festivals. In any case Nobs was a passionate blues, R&B as well as jazz fan originally. and had no reservations about opening the festival up in terms of genre. Other highlights include a rare intimately shot Marvin Gaye in performance while private behind-the-scenes footage adds a fly-on-the-wall touch: from Ella Fitzgerald being greeted on arrival through to Nobs on harmonica with pianist Champion Jack Dupree duet-ing by the swimming pool in 1970. Major events highlighted includes the casino fire at a Frank Zappa concert immortalised in Deep Purple's 'Smoke on the Water'. 'Funky Claude', as he was hailed in the lyrics, was the perfect host, regularly inviting friends and musicians to his exclusive chalet in later years.

Nobs retired in 2010 and was fatally injured in a skiing accident three years later, but his colleagues describe how the world had already left Nobs behind at least a decade previously. Music business pros were now controlling touring schedules to the detriment of the kind of personal touch, spontaneity, extended social hangs, and offbeat approach to curation that had been Nobs' trademark.

"We have to invest in that protagonist and sit on their shoulder, taking in events from their perspective as they unfold," says Murray. "Claude was a larger-than-life individual and made his dream come true through sheer willpower."

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Charting the Jazz Message/August 2023

Photo: Emily Dennison

Matthew Halsall

The *Jazzwise* Chart

Currently spinning on the Jazzwise team's stereos...

1 Matthew Halsall An Ever Changing View *Gondwana*
2 Shakti This Moment *Abstract Logix*
3 Uriel Herman Different Eyes *Ubuntu*
4 Polly Gibbons As It Is *Pastiche Records*
5 Jay Phelps The Now *Platoon*
6 Kurt Rosenwinkel Undercover: Live At The Village Vanguard *Heartcore Records*
7 Dorothy Ashby With Strings Attached (6 LP box) *New Land*
8 Omer Klein Life & Fire *Warner Music*
9 Peter Brötzmann/Majid Bekkas/Hamid Drake Catching Ghosts *ACT Music*
10 Aphex Twin Syro (3LP vinyl) *Warp*

JAZZ FM
Essential sounds from Jazz FM on DAB

1 Mama Terra The Summoned *Acid Jazz*
2 Jon Batiste World Music Radio *Verve*
3 Darcy James Argue Dynamic Maximum Tension *Nonesuch*
4 Nicola Conte Umoja *Far Out Recordings*
5 Meshell Ndegeocello The Omnichord Real Book *Blue Note*
6 Donny McCaslin I Want More *Edition*
7 Joe Armon-Jones & Maxwell Owin Archetype *AQUARIi*
8 Jon Regan Satisfied Mind *Symphonic*
9 Cherise Calling *Cherise Adams-Burnett*
10 Zoe Rahman Colour of Sound *Manushi Records*

SOUND RECORDS
Jazz gems from the Stroud vinyl emporium www.facebook.com/soundrecordsstroud

1 Madlib Shades of Blue *Blue Note*
2 Robert Glasper In My Element *Blue Note*
3 Harold Land Damisi *Mainstream*
4 Greg Foat & Gigi Masin Dolphin *Strut*
5 Lyman Woodard Organisation Saturday Night Special *Strata*
6 Ryuichi Sakamoto 12 *Milan Records*
7 Joe Armon Jones & Maxwell Owin Archetype *AQUARIi*
8 Jay Richford & Gary Stevan Feelings *Carosello Records*
9 Miles Davis You're Under Arrest *Columbia*
10 John Coltrane Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album *Impulse!*

J TO Z
Fresh jazz sounds on BBC Radio 3 every Saturday at 5pm

1 Ferg's Imaginary Big Band Ferg's Imaginary Big Band *Tight Lines Records*
2 Mette Henriette Drifting *ECM*
3 Gretchen Parlato & Lionel Loueke Lean In *Edition*
4 Sebastian Rochford & Kit Downes A Short Diary *ECM*
5 Nick Walters Padmāsana *D.O.T. Records*
6 Linda May Han Oh The Glass Hours *Biophilia*
7 Tom Ollendorff Open House *Fresh Sound New Talent*
8 Zoe Rahman Colour of Sound *Manushi*
9 Emma Rawicz Chroma *ACT Music*
10 Snazzback Ruins Everything *Worm Discs*

UNION MUSIC
Pre-loved and new jazz gems from the Lewes vinyl lovers

1 Miles Davis Round About Midnight *Columbia*
2 Warne Marsh Warne Marsh *Atlantic*
3 Art Pepper *The Trip Fantasy*
4 Archie Shepp & Chet Baker In Memory Of *L&R Records*
5 Freddie Hubbard Here To Stay *Blue Note*
6 Oscar Peterson & Milt Jackson How Tall *Verve*
8 Lee Morgan Candy *Blue Note*
9 Don Cherry Brown Rice *EMI*
10 Dave Brubeck Impressions Of Eurasia *Fontana*

GUEST CHART:: JAY PHELPS
Top tunes from the busy London trumpeter

1 Logan Richardson Holy Water *Wax Industry*
2 Nduduzo Makhathini In The Spirit of Ntu *Blue Note*
3 Reuben James Champagne Kisses *Rufio*
4 Theo Croker By the Way *Star People Nation*
5 Hagan Textures *Python Syndicate*
6 Oliver Night Make Believe *COOP Presents*
7 Beyoncé Renaissance *Parkwood Entertainment*
8 Duke Ellington Black, Brown And Beige *Columbia*
9 The Blackbyrds City Life *Concord Music Group*
10 Parthenope Go Somewhere Alone *Parthenope Records*

THE BLUEPRINT
Chris Philips' maraud through new jazz heat grooves and free sounds

1 Aja Monet When The Poems Do What They Do *Drink Sum Wtr*
2 Dee Byrne Outlines *Whirlwind Recordings*
3 Emma Rawicz Chroma *ACT Music*
4 Yossi Itskovich Octet Times *Self Release*
5 Kurt Rosenwinkel Undercover: Live At The Village Vanguard *Heartcore Records*
6 Various Glücklich VI compiled by Rainer Trüby *Compost Records*
7 Azamiah In Phases *Rebecca's Records*
8 Orrin Evans The Red Door *Smoke Sessions*
9 Wayne Smith Jr Be Still *Blue Collar Records*
10 Dorothy Ashby With Strings Attached (6LP box) *New Land*

THE CUTTING EDGE
Mike Chadwick selects hot new releases www.soulandjazz.com

1 Sonar Three Movements *7d Media*
2 Marriage Material Enchantment Under the Sea *Leopard*
3 Harold Lopez Nussa Timba a la Americana *Blue Note*
4 Frank Zappa Funky Nothingness *Zappa Records*
5 Nils Kugelmann Stormy Beauty *ACT Music*
6 Soft Machine Other Doors *Dyad Records*
7 Terrace Martin Fine Tune *Sounds of Crenshaw*
8 Shakti This Moment *Abstract Logix*
9 Aja Monet When the Poems Do What They Do *drink sum wtr*
10 Horacio Chivo Borraro Blues Para un Cosmonauta *Altercat*

EUROPE JAZZ MEDIA
Selected by Europe's leading jazz media

1 Isach Skeidsvoll Dance To Summon *Ultraäâni*
2 Emma Rawicz Chroma *ACT Music*
3 Roberto Bonati & Parmafrontiere Orchestra La Fóla De L'oca/Overtime *Parmafrontiere*
4 Jan Gunnar Hoff Home *2l*
5 The Selva Camarão-Girafa *Clean Feed*
6 Naïssam Jalal Healing Rituals *Les Couleurs Du Son*
7 PJEV/Kit Downes/Hayden Chisholm Medna Roso *Red Hook Records*
8 Blade Brian & The Fellowship Band Kings Highway *Stoner Hill*
9 Musicmusicmusic Äventyret *Hoobrecords*
10 Nils Økland/Sigbjørn Apeland Glimmer *ECM*

SOMETHIN' ELSE
With Jez Nelson Sunday nights 10pm on Jazz FM

1 Matthew Halsall An Ever Changing View *Gondwana*
2 Don Cherry, Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell Old and New Dreams *ECM Luminessence*
3 Dee Byrne Outlines *Whirlwind Recordings*
4 Emma Rawicz Chroma *ACT Music*
5 Kaisa Maensivu Taking Shape *Greenleaf*
6 Carlos Nino and Friends I'm Just Chillin *International Anthem*
7 Yoni Mayraz Dybbuk Tse! *Astigmatic*
8 Knoel Scott ft Marshall Allen Celestial *Night Dreamer*
9 Russ Lossing & King Vulture Alternate Side Parking *Aqua Piazza*
10 Tyshawn Sorey Continuing *Pi Recordings*

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SATURDAY 29

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BAIANA

SUNDAY 30

STEAM DOWN
SOWETO KINCH
KEITH WAITHE &
THE MACUSI PLAYERS
EDISON HERBERT
BRASS FUNKEYS
FERGS QUILL TRIO

SOUTH STAGE

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SATURDAY 29

MAMA SUTRA
THEO BARD
KAIDA AKINNIBI
INTIMATE FRIENDS
SOKKYO
SWAMP ROCK DJ

SUNDAY 30

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Blue Note teams up with Third Man Records for Detroit-themed LP series

Jack White

Third Man Records, the label and retailing/manufacturing empire owned by rock star Jack White (White Stripes, The Raconteurs, The Dead Weather), has teamed up with Blue Note to create the 313 Series Partnership, showcasing five Detroit-themed albums from the Blue Note catalogue. Each has been chosen for re-release by Blue Note Records President – and Detroit native – Don Was. The 313 Series Partnership will include such classic Blue Note titles as Thad Jones' *Detroit-New York Junction* (1956), Donald Byrd's *Electric Byrd* (1970), Elvin Jones' *Genesis* (1971), a first-ever vinyl reissue of Kenny Cox and The Contemporary Jazz Quintet's *Multidirection* (1969) and a first-ever LP release of Grant Green's *Live at Club Mozambique* (1971).

All five releases in the 313 Series are newly remastered from the original tapes at Third Man's Detroit mastering and pressing facility, where sound and mastering engineer Warren Defever and the Third Man team "worked to ensure the closest possible approximation of the magic found on the original masters".

Exclusive limited-edition colour vinyl variants will be available via Third Man, Blue Note, and indie record stores, with just 313 copies available per variant. Standard black vinyl LPs will not be limited editions.

Thad Jones *Detroit-New York Junction* and Donald Byrd *Electric Byrd* will be available on 21 July, followed by Elvin Jones *Genesis* and Kenny Cox *Multidirection* on 22 September. Finally, Grant Green *Live At Club Mozambique* will be released on 3 November. Pre-orders are being taken now for all five titles.

"There's no better way for us to celebrate the abundance of Detroit talent on the Blue Note roster than this 313 collaboration with our hometown brothers and sisters at Third Man Records," says Don Was of the partnership. "Spin your turntables, close your eyes, and listen as the sweet analogue sounds of Detroit Jazz roll through your mind like the cool, clear waters of the River Rouge."

Was adds that the five albums in the 313 Series Partnership "highlight the best of the Motor City – innovative sounds, incredible playing and that inexplicable something you know is real".

Last year, White teamed up with Verve/UMe to resurrect the Verve by Request series on vinyl – focusing on rare gems and fan-requested jazz albums from the Verve Label Group stable, each hand-picked by Verve and Third Man. Releases so far include both long-out-of-print titles from the vault as well as the first-ever vinyl pressings for albums released in the 1990s only originally released on CD. Albums in the Verve By Request series have included titles by Dorothy Ashby, Roy Brooks, Alice Coltrane, Gábor Szabó, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler and Wayne Shorter. Pharoah Sanders' *Black Unity* will be released this week (14 July). **www.thirdmanstore.co.uk**

International Anthem to release Jaimie Branch's final album in August

International Anthem Records is to release – on 25 August – the final record made by Jaimie Branch. Titled *Fly or Die Fly or Die Fly or Die ((world war))*, the album comes out just days after the one-year anniversary of the trumpeter-composer's tragic and unexpected death last summer at the age of just 39.

Fly or Die Fly or Die Fly or Die ((world war)) was recorded in April 2022 during Branch's artist residency at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, Nebraska. Backed by her regular Fly or Die bandmates – cellist Lester St Louis, bassist Jason Ajemian, and drummer Chad Taylor – the album features Branch's signature trumpet tones, as well as a greater emphasis on vocals. Guest musicians include Nick Broste (trombone), Rob Frye (flute, bass clarinet), Daniel Villarreal (percussion) and Akenya Seymour and Kuma Dog (voices).

The album was nearly complete when Branch died on 22 August 2022, with only mixing tweaks, final titles, and artwork to be finalised. In the months following, her family (led by her sister Kate Branch), her bandmates, and her collaborators at International Anthem banded together to gather memories, texts, emails, photographs, artwork, and fragments belonging to Jaimie to finish the record.

The tracklist is as follows: 'aurora rising', 'borealis dancing', 'burning grey', 'the mountain', 'baba louie', 'bolinko bass', 'and kuma walks', 'take over the world' and 'world war ((reprise))'. 'take over the world' is the first single from the album and is out now via the usual digital channels.

The album will be released on CD, three different coloured vinyl LP variants and streaming and hi-res download. **www.jaimiebranch.com**

Max Roach's classic 1968 *Members...* LP gets wider issue

This month DJ and broadcaster Gilles Peterson gets to re-release an album that he cites as one of his "all-time top ten jazz albums".

Peterson's Arc Records will release a special vinyl LP version of Max Roach's *Members, Don't Git Weary* on 14 July. Originally recorded in June 1968, *Members, Don't Git Weary* reflects the tumult of that year: it was taped under the long shadow cast by the assassinations of US Attorney General Robert Kennedy and civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King, and is described as "an appeal to keep faith and remain hopeful" as a spiral of violence escalated across America. Joining Roach on the album are Gary Bartz on sax, Charles Tolliver on trumpet, Stanley Cowell on piano, Jymie Merritt on electric bass, and vocalist Andy Bey on the title track.

Members, Don't Git Weary was released last year as a limited-edition LP by Real Gone Music (*Jazzwise* 278), which quickly sold out. The (non-limited) Arc version features a full-colour four-page insert with brand new sleevenotes featuring Charles Tolliver and Gary Bartz, as well as never-before-seen 1968 images of Roach from the Warners Archive. The audio was remastered from the original analogue tapes by the multi-Grammy winning engineer Bernie Grundman. **www.arc-records.bandcamp.com**

HARRIS PIANO JAZZ BAR

MARTIN LONGLEY visits the enigmatically-named Harris Piano Jazz Bar, an oasis of jazz in Kraków, Poland

In some cities, jazz clubs are fortunate to inhabit privileged locations, nestling on central squares. There's Philly Joe's on Freedom Square, Tallinn, and there's also Jazovia in Gliwice, Poland, on Rynek. Here in Kraków, we have three jazz clubs in close proximity to the main touristic square.

There's the basement Muniaka, the Piec Art Acoustic Jazz Club (also below ground), and there's the Harris Piano Jazz Bar (yes, it's down stone steps too). This latter joint is your scribe's fave, and not just because it's literally sitting at the edge of the main square. There's a particular momentum here, a late night aura that mostly continues after midnight, even during midweek.

Bands play virtually every evening, and there's an openness to jazz-adjacent styles such as blues and soul. A statuette of a singer greets visitors by the front door, and then there's a huge statue of a reclining trumpeter, as we curve down the stairs. Harris serves a large selection of pizzas, which are mostly consumed in its back room, but it also has a separate bar area, besides the core performance stage. It's a labyrinth!

Late last year, the venue celebrated its 25th anniversary, having opened in 1997. Maciej Węglarz has run Harris for the last decade, together with his brother. We grabbed a table for an interview, between the Arek Skolik Quartet's second and third sets. The brothers took over Harris from its founding owners, who also run several other local businesses.

"It's kind of a family connection, because it's the family from my brother's side. We are from different fathers," says Węglarz. "He used to work here, then lived in the Netherlands, but wanted to return to Poland, and this opportunity came up."

In the beginning the den was called the New York Piano Bar. By the time that the brothers had taken over it had turned into a fully jazzed club.

"It wasn't a revolution, it was more like evolution," says Węglarz. "We made some changes, but the foundation was already here. In the beginning we had to learn how to run the place. My brother used to work a restaurant business. Myself, I'm a big fan of music. It's my passion."

The brothers learned how to book bands on the hoof, receiving much advice from local musicians. Nowadays, they are experts on the after hours jazz scene. Even when the calendar features global, folk, hip-hop, blues, funk or soul-tinged acts, there's usually a marked jazz core to their signature sound.

"I'm a big black music fan in general," says Węglarz. "Hip-hop came from jazz, and there's soul and funk. It is not artificial."

Prior to the lockdown period, Harris used to host regular combos from other countries, including the USA, but returning to that previous state has involved a slow progress, as the Russian invasion started, and then economics became increasingly problematic for most folks. Plus, there's a tendency for band members to suddenly get taken ill.

"We get fewer offers from abroad," Węglarz muses. "And we also have a smaller budget now, so we are not able to invite visitors as much as we used to. It's not easy to plan. We used to book months ahead, but now it's more like one month ahead, or maybe two. There are so many uncertainties. It's the same for artists, they find it hard to book ahead."

Your scribe observes optimistically how crowded the club had looked in the nights coinciding with the Jazz Juniors festival. "On Wednesdays it's usually very busy, as we have a jam session," says Węglarz, explaining the midweek crush. The nature of the jam session switches each week, moving from jazz to hip-hop, groove to blues.

The big mystery is the reason behind the Harris naming: "I asked the original owners, and they didn't know, they couldn't explain it to me. Nobody knows! It's not named after Barry Harris or Eddie Harris, that's for sure."

The excellent Jazz Juniors competition takes place in October, and the Harris Piano Jazz Bar makes a particularly fine joint for a late evening session, following each night's festival gigs. Or alternatively, on any other jazz-hungry Kraków night...

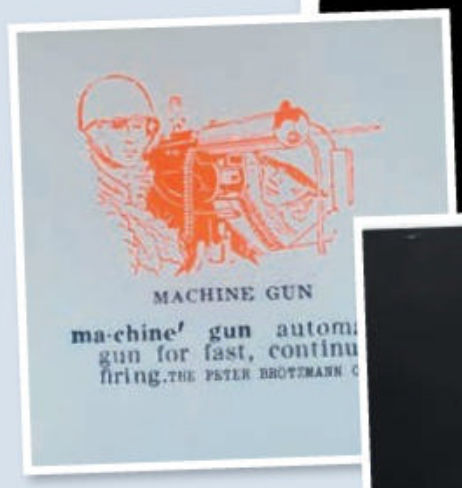
Your hostess greets you upon arrival...

Photos: Martin Longley

Peter Brötzmann:
06/3/1941 – 22/6/2023

Back in 2013, I asked Peter Brötzmann if he would ever stop playing. His answer was an emphatic 'no'. He would, he said, carry on "as long as my body keeps me going and my brain works somehow." It's emblematic of his total commitment to an all-consuming, life-long artistic calling that he has been true to his word. News of his death comes just four months after his final performances in February this year.

Born in Remscheid, in western Germany, Brötzmann first came to jazz aged 13, after witnessing a life-changing concert by clarinettist Sidney Bechet. Teaching himself clarinet and then saxophone, he began gigging in local Dixieland and swing bands. He was also an aspiring visual artist and, aged 18, he moved to the city of Wuppertal – his home ever since – to study graphic design, painting and sculpture, and worked as assistant to Korean Fluxus artist Nam Jun Paik. His interest in visual arts never left him – and he continued to design album covers, posters and flyers throughout his career – but, influenced by the new free-jazz he heard emanating from the US, he had, by the early 1960s, fully committed to music.



After releasing his debut album, 1967's *For Adolphe Sax*, he burst into the public consciousness the following year with the epochal *Machine Gun* (titled after a nickname bestowed on him by Don Cherry). Recorded while students manned the barricades in Paris, *Machine Gun* plugged into the youthful, countercultural spirit of May 1968, presenting a snarling barrage of fierce, refusenik energy, and made him an instant avant-jazz star.

It was also revolutionary in its proposal of a distinctly European form of free music – an idea he developed further with his ground-breaking trio with Belgian pianist Fred Van Hove and Dutch drummer Han Bennink between 1970 and 1975, and subsequent duo with Bennink. The albums they made stand as defining documents of European free improvisation, echoes of which can still be heard in the practices of contemporary artists.

Throughout the 1980s and 90s, Brötzmann worked in a variety of uncompromising international settings, from his short-lived trio with South Africans, bassist Harry Miller and drummer Louis Moholo, to the crashing excess of Last Exit, his free-jazz supergroup with bassist Bill Laswell, guitarist Sonny Sharrock and drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson – an outfit that attracted younger fans of noise-rock with its ferocious volume and velocity.

He also formed the Die Like A Dog Quartet with trumpeter Toshinori Kondo, legendary bassist William Parker and drummer Hamid Drake, laying the foundations for his enduring trio with Parker and Drake.

Between 1997 and 2012, he led the Chicago Tentet, a free-wheeling juggernaut that brought together younger American and Scandinavian players such as saxophonists Ken Vandermark and Mats Gustafsson, as well as veteran trumpeter/saxophonist Joe McPhee.

In his later years, Brötzmann continued to tour and record at an astonishing rate, collaborating widely with an inquisitive generosity of spirit and a firm belief in the democratic and liberating models of human interaction suggested by musical cooperation.

He was, by the end, a global jazz superstar, revered for his huge, raw tone and superhuman power. But he struggled with the lung condition COPD, which, exacerbated by a bout of pneumonia during the Covid-19 pandemic, greatly reduced his legendary capacity for blowing. When he emerged from lockdown, it was with a more meditative style, employing shorter phrases and less reliance on pyrotechnics – a sound that fully revealed a firm basis in the blues and an aching lyricism that had been there all along, lurking under the gruff, tough-guy exterior. He is remembered as a pioneering trailblazer, a total artist and a true original.

Daniel Spicer

Photo: Tim Dickeson

Astrud Gilberto:
29/3/1940 – 5/6/2023

So *tchau e obrigada*, Brazilian samba and bossa nova icon Astrud Gilberto, who has died aged 83. Most famously the singer behind 'The Girl From Ipanema', the silky 1960s pop-jazz ear worm that kept the four-time-Grammy-winning, Creed Taylor-produced *Getz/Gilberto* album (on Verve) riding the US charts for an astounding two years, she leaves behind a substantial legacy as a vocalist, composer, producer and actress, and a reputation as a victim of music industry greed and #MeToo-style misogyny that could do with redressing.

Born Astrud Evangelina Weinert in Salvador, Bahia, to a German father, a language professor, and a Brazilian multi-instrumentalist mother, the young Astrud grew up in Rio de Janiero in a household steeped in music.

Her inherited knack for languages – she would go on to speak French, Italian, Spanish, English and Japanese as well as her native Portuguese – arguably heightened her powers of interpretation; she brought a fresh, accessible dimension to American tunes including 'Fly Me To The Moon' and 'The Shadow of Your Smile' with a knowing sparkle that eluded even the likes of Sinatra. A fine songwriter, her live shows featured many of her original compositions; most of the tracks on *Jungle*, released in 2002 and her final album, are hers. Bacharach/David's 'The Look of Love' is on that one, too, a version right up there with Dusty Springfield's.

Sure, she came to international attention after serendipitously being in the A&R recording studios in New York with her then husband, guitarist João Gilberto, the bossa nova pioneer she'd married in 1959, and renowned American tenor saxophonist Stan Getz. 'Garota de Ipanema', a tune composed in 1962 by pianist Antônio Carlos Jobim and poet Vinicius de Moraes about the passing of time, had been given an English translation by Norman Gimbel (who would go on to write 'Killing Me Softly'). Astrud Gilberto, then 22, said she'd sing it.

She had no previous recording experience. But her duet with her husband was so beguiling, so dreamy, that she was asked to sing on another Jobim track, 'Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars)'. By all accounts, all involved twigged that 'The Girl From Ipanema' would be a smash. Creed Taylor and the allegedly unpleasant Getz would later take credit for Astrud Gilberto's inclusion, which rankled: "Nothing is further from the truth," she said in 1982. "I suppose I should feel flattered by the importance they lend to this."

Re-edited without Joao's Portuguese-language vocals and released as a solo single, 'The Girl From Ipanema' went gangbusters in 1964, the same year the couple divorced. Astrud Gilberto toured the US with Getz and his band, her small son Marcelo in tow, a period made more difficult by the lack of a credit on the original pressing of *Getz/Gilberto*, by the saxophonist's poor pay and apparent determination that she receive no royalties, and by her outrageously sexist treatment in the Brazilian press and by many Brazilian musicians. Following a concert in Rio in 1965, the by now US-based Gilberto never performed in her home country again.

Then there was her stage fright, which she tackled head on by studying with method queen Stella Adler for two years – after appearing in two motion pictures, 1964's *The Hanged Man* and that same year's *Get Yourself A College Girl* alongside The Dave Clark Five and organist Jimmy Smith. Her 1965 solo debut *The Astrud Gilberto Album* was a bestseller, as were releases such as 1966's Gil Evans-arranged *Look to the Rainbow* and 1971's *Gilberto With Turrentine*, works that underscored her passion for jazz's major players (she also worked with Quincy Jones on the soundtrack of the Sidney Lumet-directed 1967 film *The Deadly Affair*). Her 1977 album *That Girl From Ipanema* featured Chet Baker, a childhood idol, on a version of 'Far Away', for which she wrote the melody (and indeed, a disco version of 'The Girl....' that she wasn't paid for).

There were other oversights; her family (including her son Gregory from her defunct second marriage to Nicholas LaSorsa) claimed she was never compensated or credited for her production work; in these and other instances, her trusting nature was to her detriment. Still, when bossa nova made a comeback in the early 1980s, and with Gilberto cited as a major influence by the likes of Sade and Everything But the Girl, she assembled a band of guitars, drums, keys, trombone and percussion and – with Marcelo as bassist and road manager – and toured the US, Canada, Europe and Japan. She was so big in Japan that she released albums there and nowhere else (their emergence in the West is surely only a matter of time), while 1987's *Astrud Gilberto Plus The James Last Orchestra* included 'I'm Nothing Without You' - her lyrics over Jobim's melody.

In 1990 she formed Gregmar Productions with her sons, continuing to record and sell-out venues including SOB's in New York City and House of Blues in Los Angeles. In 1992 she received the Latin Jazz USA Award for Lifetime Achievement; in 2002 she was inducted into the International Latin Music Hall of Fame, after which she announced she was taking indefinite time off from public performances. She lived her last years in Philadelphia, allegedly in an apartment overlooking a river: painting, reading philosophy, campaigning against cruelty to animals and feeling the love of a global army of fans, and a family that included her granddaughter, Sofia Gilberto.

"I love and will love Astrud forever," Sofia wrote in a social media post. "She was the face and voice of bossa nova in most parts of the planet. Astrud will be forever in our hearts."

Jane Cornwell

Turn up the quiet

Eddie Myer talks to **Tom Ollendorff**, a rising star whose modest demeanor disguises fearsome talent and ambition

Tom Ollendorff is a quiet man making a big noise. His self-deprecating charm allows for glimpses of a steely determination to pursue his musical vision, and he's already attracting all the right sorts of attention.

We're speaking on the day after his band played in Dalston's Vortex club promoting *Open House*, his sophomore release on the legendary Barcelona-based Fresh Sound New Talent label: the album features guest appearances by much-feted NYC saxophonist Ben Wendel, and although Ben couldn't be on the gig, another surprise guest saxophonist took to the stage: storied UK legend Tim Garland. With support from the NYC cutting edge, key European scenesters, and the UK's elder statesmen, as well as the accolades of his youthful peers, exciting possibilities are unfolding before him.

"My first record came out in 2021 and I toured it quite a bit – then I was introduced to Ben by the guitarist Gilad Hekselman and I thought I'd see if I could invite him to the UK to do some gigs with my trio with Marc and Michel", Tom explains. "It worked so well – he's such a phenomenal player and, honestly, it takes a bit of pressure off myself, so I wrote some more music for him. I've certainly had some stressful experiences in the studio before but this time everything was so easy – I'm really happy with how it came out and now even after hundreds of playbacks I still don't hate it which is a first!"

Was Ben sympathetic to the material?

"Yes! What really blew me away was how masterful he is at delivering something simple - playing the melodies of the songs. A lot of my melodies are simple, which I try and support by a more complex rhythmic or harmonic thing - Ben interprets a melody so strongly and musically – then he can take it up a gear"

What's the relationship between simplicity and complexity in your music?

"I never try to make things complex for the sake of it – it doesn't move me. *Hearts Wide Open* by Gilad Hekselman was an important record for me when I was getting into jazz, and I played it over and over until I felt that I could sing the whole record - only later did I realise what complexity is hidden within it. Like John Coltrane - there's complexity there but there's also very simple raw things happening. That's what I'm more moved by."

How important is the legacy of jazz to you? I ask. "So important! We've been listening to Art Tatum in the car and the virtuosity is amazing - the more you dig in the more rewarding it is! The grounding in the traditional repertoire is very important to me; most of my writing uses chords and structures that are based on the type of harmonic connections you find in standards. And we play tunes by Rollins and Parker on the record, and a solo version of Victor Young's 'My Foolish Heart' - I love finding new ways to explore these tunes."

You love to play solo? "Yes! I love it! I have a book of solo *études* out [published by Faber] and in a way I feel most comfortable playing solo, and I'm trying to incorporate more into the show – I spent a lot of time playing

TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF...

Groover and shaker

Bassist, impresario, activist... **Marianne Windham** is a woman of many, many talents. **Peter Vacher** hears her story

There's an old adage which says if you want something done, you ask a busy person. Well, it's been modified recently, to read if you want a job well done, you ask a woman. Which brings us neatly to bassist and Guildford Jazz founder Marianne Windham. Now a valuable player in her own right, she made the ultimate mid-life decision, reinventing herself as a working musician and jazz activist, having set aside a successful career as the director of a software business.

When we talked about the challenges involved in being both player and promoter, I first asked her to think back to the time when she embarked on what must have seemed a risky new venture.

"It felt like a huge decision to make and I agonised for some months," she tells me, adding that, "many of us spend our lives gradually accruing skills, responsibilities, and achieving stability as we become more established in our professional life. So, by stepping out of my profession, it felt like I was back at the start of the journey all over again. I had very limited skills and understanding about music itself and the business of music, or the implications of giving up my professional status and financial position. All of which felt rather scary and some may say quite unwise! But my husband was very supportive and we thought we could manage financially if we were careful. I've always been quite driven and once I'd made the decision, it was a case of getting on with it. I've rarely regretted it," she smiles.

Marianne had played cello as a teenager – both parents were musical – and resumed playing, "a bit of cello after having children and was invited to play in a covers band. Then the bass player asked me to play bass for a number so he could play guitar and that was the Damascene moment. This deep sound you could feel right through you, anchoring everything. Fabulous!"

Initially, this was achieved via the electric

solo and posting videos over lockdown I guess, and it opened up so many doors. I'm making a solo record later this year I'm really fascinated by the challenge of trying to play harmony and melody on the guitar, and making everything strong and musical".

I ask about his route into music: "I was a self-taught guitarist up until the age of about 18. There was lots of music at school but I was never really into jazz! Then my dad took me to a jazz gig after school, and there was guitarist called Guy Harrop there. I was fascinated so I just approached him and asked for lessons. He loved George Benson, so George was my entry point. Then *Kind Of Blue* and *Something Else* - all the obvious ones - and I discovered all this harmony that didn't exist in the rock music I had been listening to til then. I was lucky enough to get into Royal Welsh College in Cardiff and that's where I really started to learn about jazz.

"Gilad Hekselman was my first guitar idol - the dynamics, the touch, so much I didn't understand. Then Kurt Rosenwinkel, Mike Marino - and then I worked my way back to Wes and Kenny Burrell and Bud Powell, once I had the musical maturity to appreciate them! It's such endlessly giving music".

You play in Europe quite a bit - how important are those horizons for you?

"Sometimes it seems that the UK is isolated from Europe, and the scene here is so strong - people like Steve Fishwick and Mike Chillingworth, who I just played with recently, are world class! It's new for me but touring as a sideman with people like Ari Hoenig has opened a lot of doors!"

How did the Ari connection come about? "Well, I helped bring Gilad to to the UK, because I saw that he hardly ever gigged here! Then I did the same for Ari - I wanted to study with him so I went to New York and then one thing led to another. So many people studied with Ari to learn his rhythmic concept and touring with him really taught me how to practice and learn music properly. He's a master of what he does and it made me realise the level of work, attention and depth that you need to get to that level. I needed to put more work in!"

What now? I ask in conclusion.

"Working with more musicians like Ari, Gilad and pianist Nitai Hershkovits, people at that level. I've got some more things on the table – a solo record, touring with my trio and going to new places, and keeping challenging myself musically. This is a really exciting moment for guitar in jazz! I keep hearing these new players and it seems to be evolving so fast - from Metheny and Holdsworth and Scofield reinventing the role of the guitar, through Gilad and Kurt, and now people like Pedro Martins. I can't wait to see where we get to next."

Photo: Dave Hamblett

instrument until Wendy, the band singer, suggested they go on a jazz weekend workshop at South Hill Park.

"And that was the moment I fell in love with jazz," she says. "I was totally out of my depth but the tutors were fantastic and encouraged everyone to just play. I knew absolutely nothing about this music and its many varieties, so I started to listen and really discovered jazz properly for the first time. I quickly found bass players like Mingus and Ron Carter, and then Ray Brown, and that was the moment I knew I needed to get an upright bass."

So, at the age of 43, Windham bought her first double bass, and then two years later, "I bought Andy Cleyndert's bass and that was a pivotal moment. I'm a great admirer of Andy's playing and started going to him for lessons. He's been a huge influence on my development."

Asked now about the bassists who inspire her, she cites Brown straightaway. "I think he has everything that I could aspire to: a great sense of swing, drive, intonation, tone, melodic lines, articulation... everything!" she enthuses. "I love the passion and big sound of Mingus too," and reels off a list of other favourites: Scott LaFaro, Paul Chambers, Dave Holland, Gary Peacock, Christian McBride, Oscar Pettiford; and admits, "I keep finding new people to listen to! It's a lifetime's work."

Now committed to this new way of life, Marianne went on more jazz courses, and met other like-minded people.

"Soon there were lots of opportunities to play and I started running the jazz club shortly after giving up work. I saw the venue and just did it! This gave me the opportunity to play with some great musicians although goodness knows what they made of me."

Given the Brown-like musicality and drive in her playing as recently observed, I'd say they were more than fortunate to have her alongside. Her business background was doubtless helpful when it came to organising events and clubs around the Guildford area, but Marianne says that playing remains her principal kick.

"Playing every time! Although in some way, the two roles are much the same. As a bass player I feel it's my job to be the glue that helps hold things together, to underpin the band. As an organiser I'm providing the glue between the musicians and the audience, helping to facilitate what will hopefully be a great experience for everyone. I love the diversity of jazz and enjoy fitting in with the different people I play with," she continues. "Each gig is a different challenge. I really love straight-ahead jazz as you can probably tell from my choice of bass players and I get the most joy when I feel I'm connecting to the musicians around me and fulfilling what they need from me. I'm still very much learning to play, of course, and sometimes I'm dissatisfied with how I've played after a gig, but I've had some really kind comments about my progress from other musicians which is hugely encouraging. I know my experience doesn't fit the normal route but I hope to continue to still enjoy the journey of becoming a better musician."

Having had no intention originally of setting up a club, Windham went on to create Guildford Jazz, running it with 'a great team' of helpers and building a thriving membership, with local hero Bill Bruford as Patron, while handling the heavy promotional, booking, and ticketing responsibilities herself. Oh yes, she also runs Fleet Jazz Club, books gigs at Farnham Maltings and promotes outreach events at locations around the county. And a local festival too.

"We've put on more than 300 gigs plus 100 jam sessions, with a total audience of about 30,000 and raised over £100,000 for local charities!", she says proudly, "and I want to go on doing well by the music and by other musicians."

MUSIC IN COLOUR

With a string of awards and critically-acclaimed albums to her name, pianist **Zoe Rahman** has earned a place at the forefront of the UK jazz scene. With the release of *Colour Of Sound*, her most expansive album to date, she tells **Kevin Le Gendre** about how the music was forged from the whole spectrum of human experience

One of London's great houses of culture, the Barbican centre is a welcome spot for midweek conversation. It is a calm space. But today the lounge is cordoned off, with staff in a notable bustle for a forthcoming exhibition amid a season of concerts.

Hence the pub around the corner is a quickly improvised 'plan B' for a meeting with Zoe Rahman. As we take the short walk, a few students with saxophone cases come into view, presumably on their way to the nearby Guildhall School Of Music. This is fitting, as education, its whys and wherefores, is of the greatest interest to the pianist.

"Children just don't have the same opportunities that I had when I was growing up, my school teacher was a piano player, she used to teach recorder, guitar, we were always doing musical shows in just an ordinary primary school," she says of her upbringing in Bosham, West Sussex. "But these days they don't have access in the same way, they don't have free opportunities to play, they don't have instruments.

"There's a whole generation that don't have that knowledge; and it's something that can really help in many aspects of their lives, both emotionally and academically."

Although softly spoken, Rahman is not at all timid when she makes the statement. In any case, there is an important anecdotal rejoinder. The pianist helped her local school in Barnet, North London, to acquire a Yamaha Grand piano during the pandemic, as a means to counter the lack of provision she decries. Furthermore, one of her own pieces 'Go With The Flow', is now taught at Grade 8 on the classical piano syllabus.

The subject is all the more pertinent given that Rahman has two children, who, at the ages of 6 and 9, are both musicians. Yet motherhood is both celebration and challenge.

Photo: Ilze Kitshoff

"I am always listening to all kinds of music and absorbing... but I am completely inspired by other female jazz composers and piano players"

Photo: Ilze Kitscoff

"Well, I don't get out of bed at midday anymore, that's for sure!" she chuckles.

"Anyone with children knows it's all encompassing, which is fantastic... that's a beautiful thing. But it's a completely different life pre-children and post-children. In terms of making music, it gives you lots of inspiration... watching them grow, it's a joyful experience, it feeds into the music. But just in terms of time... when you have to run out and do a gig and you have to organise who's looking after the children.... especially as my partner's a musician as well; it's very difficult if we're both gigging at the same time. It's a different mindset. I've been playing piano since I was four, so I'm always thinking about music and don't have to be at the piano. The times when you do get to sit down and play you have to really focus, there's no time-wasting."

Her trademark expanse of hair tied back, Rahman is relaxed and casually elegant in jeans and a burgundy shawl that should offer protection against the nip in the air that has come with the beginning of an unusually cool June. She is as unassuming and friendly as she was some 20 years ago when we first met, just as her debut album *The Cynic*, an accomplished trio session, landed on a UK jazz scene that enjoyed neither its current media profile, nor the relatively high visibility of several female players.

Since that time Rahman has created an impressive discography that has seen her both build on and move away from the piano-double bass-drums format. *Melting Pot* and *Kindred Spirits* charted a growing confidence in the small group setting, but equally impressive were two duo sets, 2013's *Unison*, with Czech bass legend George Mraz and 2015's *Song (The Ballad Book)*, with British multi-reed virtuoso Courtney Pine, solely playing bass clarinet. In both cases, Rahman's stealthy touch on the keyboard, combining wistful lyricism and punchy rhythmic momentum, came to the fore. She successfully served the material with as much languid understatement as lively flourish.

Also worth mentioning is the less explicitly jazz item in Rahman's catalogue. Born to a Bengali father and English mother, she nodded to her paternal roots with *Where Rivers Meet*, a joint project with her saxophonist-clarinetist brother Idris Rahman, which featured reprises of the music of the renowned polymath Rabindranath Tagore among others. The work had a distinct mission statement: "It was a way to explore Bengali music, language and culture that I wasn't familiar with, growing up in Chichester," she comments.

Rahman's new album, *Colour Of Sound*, does her elders and youngers proud. The music is as personal as anything she has penned to date, with several titles referring to the presence of her children, such as 'Little Ones' and 'Sweet Jasmine', named for her daughter, while other songs are inspired by subjects such as adversity and community.

Stylistically, the music reflects Rahman's position as a contemporary composer-improviser who has developed her own identity by drawing on an array of acoustic vocabularies that carry the spirits of anybody from Alice Coltrane and Geri Allen to McCoy Tyner and Abdullah Ibrahim. Melodically rich and rhythmically intricate, this new Rahman offering is also one of her most ambitious in both instrumentation and textural palette. Several generations of British improvisers, including flautist Rowland Sutherland, her brother Idris,

trumpeters Byron Wallen and Alex Ridout and trombonist Rosie Turton, are featured in various line-ups throughout, with the largest being an Octet. Like her many role models, Rahman is creating a sonic canvas for her work that has many different hues. But this outlook is by no means new.

"I had an idea that I wanted to do music for a large ensemble, I wanted to have a larger set-up just to show my music in a different light," she explains. "It's always been in my mind, and as a piano player you think orchestrally, because the instrument's got such a huge range, which you don't get on most other instruments.

"I love all the musicians you mentioned because they play like an orchestra; the piano is percussive, it's melodic, you've got harmony, you've got a full range dynamically. When I am writing I'm not just writing for solo piano or trio; there are always other instruments in my head. Ultimately, I'd love to do a big band. Other musicians have played my music in this context, like youth groups, NYJO recorded one of my tracks.

"But I'm *not* a horn player," she hastens to add. "So it's all experimentation, trying things out, and saying to people, 'can you play this?' I've worked really closely with my brother Idris all these years, so I have an idea of what he can do, like I also have from working with Courtney Pine on bass clarinet. Then there's Laura McDonald, an alto sax player, which obviously has a different range. Because of these different musicians that I've worked with over the years I have an idea of where things sit.

"I don't play those instruments, so I do sometimes write things that are slightly awkward," she says with a wry smile. "For the *Colour of Sound* album I was just expanding out from the piano, I'd play a chord then find where it sits with these other instruments. They can bend and play in between the notes of the piano, which I can't do myself, which is why I'm attracted to them. But it is about experimenting, maybe getting things wrong sometimes. There are elements of my music that, although they are not sung, when I hear them played on flute or clarinet, they are kind of like the voice without lyrics."

Each track on *Colour Of Sound* highlights the different character of a specific instrument so as to create a detailed spectrum that does justice to the vivid character of Rahman's writing. While the album can be seen as a work of creative maturity that the artist may not have been able to make happen at an earlier stage of her career, there is also a more practical reason as to why the project has come to fruition now.

Although she has a career spanning two decades that has been marked by substantial critical acclaim as well as institutional accolades, the most prestigious of which is a recent Ivor Novello Impact Award, Rahman has never been signed to a record label, and has had to produce – in every sense of the term – work under her own steam.

"I'm a self-releasing artist, unfortunately after all these years, 22 years," she says. There's only a certain budget, time and a certain amount of energy I can put in."

Over the years this same struggle has been endured by many jazz artists, many of whom adopted an 'own your own' principle, and set up publishing companies and record labels. Cast an eye over the history of improvised music and it is not hard to find a number of strong-willed individuals who had the courage of their convictions and simply got on with the daunting job of distributing as well as creating music.

If one were looking for a paragon of self-sufficiency, then few figures are as noteworthy as Mary Lou Williams (1910–1981). A visionary composer and piano prodigy from the swing era who was greatly instructive to the pioneers of bebop, Williams, whom contemporaries dubbed 'the First Lady of keyboard jazz', also established her own imprint, Mary Records, which stands as a relevant antecedent to Rahman's own label, Manushi.

"I think of it as meaning 'womankind'," says Rahman of the Bengali word. "Manush means 'human being' *and* 'human race'."

A Royal Academy Of Music graduate, Rahman also studied at Berklee College Of Music with another superb 'post-Williams' pianist, Joanne Brackeen, and is keen to recognise all these founding mothers.

"I am always listening to all kinds of music and absorbing, but I am completely inspired by other female jazz composers and piano players. As one of them myself I know just how hard it is to exist in a male-dominated industry," she says emphatically. "So that's extra inspiration on top of the fact that they are just amazing musicians; I mean the music comes first.

"Those people drive me forward and give me inspiration and confidence to carry on and to know what I'm doing is important. And it's about expressing something about myself that taps into other people's emotions. Despite the struggle of not just female musicians but jazz musicians in general, I am hugely inspired by that to create some kind of joy and hope for people around me. It's not just 'I'm making some music'."

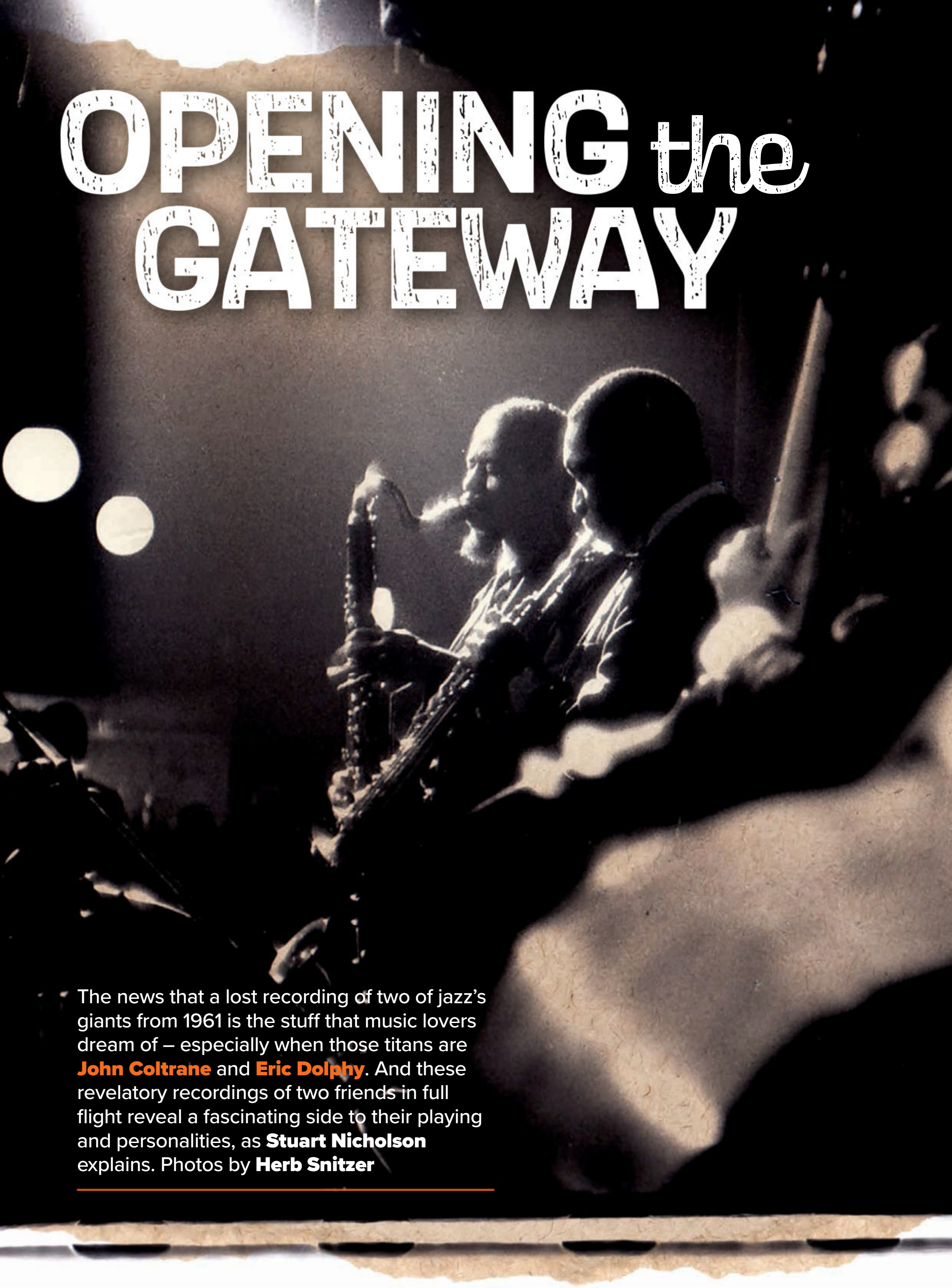
The new album bears that out insofar as it is a reflection of the full range of events in Rahman's life in the past three or four years, from the strain of the pandemic, home schooling and lack of gigs, to the stress of having to temporarily move out after a fire swept through her street to the uplifting show of local solidarity in the aftermath.

"All of those things are in my mind, it's just part of life," she says "There are some horrific things going on but there are also beautiful things happening, there is a lot of positive energy. And having children is such a joy! I wanted to express many of those things through my music. While I was mixing the album and thinking about titles, I was reading Afua Hirsch's *Brit(ish)*. Those books didn't exist when I was young.

"I grew up in West Sussex, when there weren't any other families who looked like our family, so that feeds into who I am as a human being and my experience of this world, and all that comes out in my music. But I don't really dwell on it. I am not here to make a statement politically. But I am who I am, and I do try to connect people."

Zoe Rahman plays Brecon Jazz Festival (20 Aug), Kings Place, London (6 Sept), Watermill Jazz, Dorking (12 Sept), Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham (21 Sept), Newcastle Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music (28 Sept), Howard Assembly Room, Leeds (8 Oct) and Tung Auditorium, Liverpool (13 Oct).

OPENING the GATEWAY



The news that a lost recording of two of jazz's giants from 1961 is the stuff that music lovers dream of – especially when those titans are **John Coltrane** and **Eric Dolphy**. And these revelatory recordings of two friends in full flight reveal a fascinating side to their playing and personalities, as **Stuart Nicholson** explains. Photos by **Herb Snitzer**

"The more of the great, great material from all eras that's made available, the more it gets into the hands of youngsters. I think the more quality music that gets out there and gets exposed to young people is a bit of an insurance policy for the future"

Michael Cuscuna

When John Coltrane and his quartet, plus Eric Dolphy, followed Aretha Franklin into the Village Gate, a nightclub on the corner of Thompson and Bleecker in Greenwich Village, New York City, on 9 August 1961, news had just broken that he had won *DownBeat* magazine's International Critics' Poll in three categories, Tenor Saxophone, New Star Miscellaneous Instrument (soprano saxophone) and New Star Combo. Although he was already recognised as one of the giants of contemporary jazz, Coltrane had never won an award in the critics' poll before.

But 1961 was a turning point in Coltrane's career, the year he finally broke through to a wider jazz audience. His album *My Favorite Things* had been released in March, and an edited single of the title track was enjoying good airplay, reflected in solid sales for both single and album. Atlantic had also lined up *Bags and Trane* and *Coltrane Jazz* for release that year, while Prestige put out *Settin' the Pace*. And the day after he finished his Village Gate engagement, on 1 September, *Africa/Brass*, his debut on the Impulse! label, was released with all the promotional weight the fledgling record label could mount. Coltrane was making news.

The billing for Coltrane at the Village Gate was for the John Coltrane Quartet, suggesting the addition of Dolphy was seemingly last-minute. The Coltrane group – Coltrane on tenor and soprano saxes, Eric Dolphy on alto sax and bass clarinet, McCoy Tyner on piano, Reggie Workman on bass and Elvin Jones on drums – was part of a triple billing that included the Art Blakey Quintet and the Horace Silver Quintet. The club had a basement with the main stage while upstairs was a bar with a small stage. You paid to get into the basement for the main featured acts, while the upstairs room was free, subject to a cover charge for drinks while you listened to the band. The main stage in the basement had a state-of-the-art sound system that had been installed for club owner Art D'Lugoff by an engineer called Richard Alderson, who decided to record the Coltrane quintet for his personal use, apparently without Coltrane's permission. With the passage of time, the tapes somehow found their way to the New York Library of Performing Arts, where they were recently discovered by a Bob Dylan archivist.

With the necessary permissions secured from the Coltrane Estate, the newly-unearthed tapes were prepared for release by the Impulse! label as *Evenings at the Village Gate: John Coltrane with Eric Dolphy* and released internationally on 14 July. This was with the same group that appeared on *Live at the Village Vanguard*, also recorded for Impulse!, three months later in 1961. This latter album, together with three additional CDs of previously unreleased material, was prepared for release as *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings* by three-times-Grammy winner Michael Cuscuna.

In 1997, I asked Cuscuna what relevance he felt we should attach to such previously unissued material today: "I would have to answer that in a general way," he said. "The relevance of these records to this time, and to a lot of other reissues to this time, is that I don't think of reissues as preserving the past but very much affecting the present. The more of

the great, great material from all eras that's made available, the more it gets into the hands of beginning musicians, and a lot of youngsters who are already professionals. I think the more quality music that gets out there and gets exposed to young people is a bit of an insurance policy for the future. You hear Coltrane trying different approaches to things, the key lesson is his mind is open and he's taking chances and those were two very important elements in jazz that I think are lost with a lot of today's music, which is often bit too studied and a bit too careful, and I think the spirit of nakedness in his music is a valuable lesson for musicians today."

Although the recording quality of *Evenings at the Village Gate* is not of the standard of the Village Vanguard material, it nevertheless gives the music an edginess and spatial feel to the progressively exploratory nature of the performances. Coltrane understandably plugged 'My Favorite Things,' then his current release being played on the airwaves and selling well. As Coltrane's former bassist on these sessions, Reggie Workman (now 86 years old) recalled, "John took 'My Favorite Things' and put a vamp on it and was able to give people enough of a melody so that he could give them a message in the open section of the tune. It worked so well that he said, 'Maybe I'll try it with some other things.' And he did, with 'Greensleeves,' and later 'Inch Worm' and 'Chim Chim Cher-ee'."

'Favorite Things' is followed by a feature for Eric Dolphy on bass clarinet on 'When Lights Are Low,' but on 'Impressions,' Coltrane and Dolphy seem to be consciously reaching beyond the frontiers of their own personal stylistic approaches to improvisation – Coltrane often pattern-based and reaching for harmonies upon harmonies (chord stacking), and Dolphy, with his unusual note choices, angular rhythmic perspectives and false-fingered notes above the normal register of his instruments eating into the unknown. Perhaps the most musically stimulating tracks are saved for the end in 'Africa,' and 'Greensleeves', which Coltrane had recorded with his quartet and Dolphy, augmented by a brass choir, three months earlier on *Africa/Brass*. The former follows the outline of McCoy Tyner's arrangement, which had been expanded for the larger group, and there is an engaging cut and thrust feel from all members of the group, while the haunting drone-like effects on 'Africa', over an implied key centre of D minor, see a mixture of modal exploration and pentatonicism in what

"The Village Gate had a state-of-the-art sound system that had been installed for club owner Art D'Lugoff by an engineer called Richard Alderson, who decided to record the Coltrane quintet for his personal use, apparently without Coltrane's permission. The tapes somehow found their way to the New York Library of Performing Arts, where they were recently discovered by a Bob Dylan archivist"

is a powerful performance.

What is often overlooked in contemporary times, more so as Coltrane continues to be extensively studied in jazz education – most graduate students will have completed at least two or three modules that might include his pattern based improvising, his harmonic methods (especially in re-harms of standards such as 'Body and Soul'), the three distinct periods he passed through (sheets-of-sound, modal and free), and so on – is how controversial Coltrane's and Dolphy's music was in the context of its time. In November that year, the same month of *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*, John Tynan, who would later become the jazz critic of *The New York Times*, wrote in *DownBeat*, "At Hollywood's Renaissance Club recently, I was listening to a horrifying demonstration of what appears to be a growing anti-jazz trend, exemplified by these foremost proponents [Coltrane and Dolphy] of what is termed avant-garde music... They seem bent on pursuing anarchistic course in their music that can only be termed anti-jazz." The 'anti-jazz' term was picked up by Leonard Feather and used as a basis for critical essays of Coltrane and Dolphy.

Challenging as this music may have been in 1961, anti-jazz it was not, a battle that has long been won, for no matter how far you reach beyond the mainstream, and this is true of all the arts, the mainstream eventually grows to absorb such departures. And that is what happened. Today we look on such criticism with a tolerant smile. Coltrane was ahead of the game then, and in may ways he still is. As Reggie Workman observed, "He [Coltrane] was growing into a place where he did not want to be inhibited by the steps and the changes that were prescribed by certain structures," and this is most apparent on 'Africa.'

The Dolphy and Coltrane combination stemmed from a close friendship between two musicians who shared similar values. They loved talking about music, they both strived to further their musical knowledge as far as possible, practising almost compulsively, and their personalities knitted together both on the bandstand and off. Dolphy was an immensely personable and likeable individual who was clean living – he followed the healthiest dietary pursuits he could – and the possessor of a brilliant mind, was modest and had a rich sense of humour. A measure of just how agreeable his personality was could be found in an equally close relationship with the notoriously irascible bassist Charles Mingus, who made room for him in his groups whenever he wanted.

Coltrane and Dolphy had first met on the West Coast in 1954, and although Dolphy moved to New York (originally stranded there when the Chico Hamilton Quintet from the West Coast was unexpectedly wound up in NYC) in 1959, his first recorded appearance with Coltrane was in May 1961, three months earlier than *Evenings at the Village Gate*, on Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* sessions, on which Dolphy played and conducted. Subsequently, Coltrane invited Dolphy to join his quartet thought to be around the time of the Village Gate recordings but certainly during the summer of 1961.

In an April 1962 feature in *DownBeat*, Coltrane gave fascinating insight into why the group expanded from a quartet to a quintet to include Dolphy: "A few months ago, Eric was in New York, where the group was working, and he

> ***"You hear Coltrane trying different approaches... he's taking chances and those were two very important elements in jazz that I think are lost with a lot of today's music, and I think Coltrane's spirit of nakedness is a valuable lesson for musicians today"***
>
> Michael Cuscuna

felt like playing, wanted to come down and sit in. So I told him to come on down and play, and he did – and it turned us all around. I'd felt at ease with just a quartet until then, but he came in and it was like having another member of the family. He's found another way to express the same thing we had found one way to do. After he sat in, we decided to see what it would grow into. We began to play some of the things we had only talked about before. Since he's been in the band he's had a broadening effect on us. There are a lot of things we try now that we never tried before, this helped me because I've started to write – it's necessary that we have things written so we can play together. We're playing things that are freer than before. I would like him to feel at home in the group and find a place to develop what he wants to as an individualist and as a soloist – just as I hope everybody in the band will. And while we're doing this, I would like the listener to be able to receive some of these good things – some of this beauty."

In the same 1962 feature, Dolphy explained his role within the quintet: "What I'm trying to do I find enjoyable. Inspiring – what it makes me do. It helps me play, this feel. It's like you have no idea what you're going to do next. You have an idea, but there's always that spontaneous thing that happens. This feeling, to me, leads the whole group.

"When John plays it might lead into something you had no idea could be done. Or McCoy [Tyner] does something. Or the way Elvin [Jones] or Jimmy [Garrison] play; they solo, they do something. Or when the rhythm section is sitting on something a different way. I feel that is what it does for me."

The Coltrane/Dolphy group was clearly forging its own musical trajectory, a mutually inspirational gathering of talent; even when Dolphy left to play with Mingus, he would often return to play one-off dates with the quartet. Quite where this was leading was cut short by Dolphy's premature death from an undiagnosed diabetic condition in 1964.

"It was an exploratory time for John," Workman says. "He was always reaching for new sounds and Eric being in the group was part of that. John really respected Eric a lot. They were close in concept. Listening to the recording from the Gate, you can hear how Eric would take long solos and John would come after him and take a much shorter solo than he would normally take and let Eric's voice be prominent. I remember John sitting off to the side of the stage, listening to him doing a lot of different things. He loved Eric's sound on bass clarinet."

Evenings at the Village Gate and *Live at the Village Vanguard* capture the essence of the exploratory zeal of this unique quintet, and this is key to their value today. Even after repeated listening, there is still a feeling the next time you listen to it, the music might abruptly change course, do something unexpected or head in a new direction.

The intensity of music is constantly tumbling towards pastures musically new, to a destination yet to be defined. It is music in the state of becoming, yet to reach the limits of Coltrane's and Dolphy's collective imaginations. Later in 1962 Coltrane explained to Francis Postiff, a French journalist for *Jazz Hot* magazine, something of how his underlying aesthetic to keep developing and evolving as an artist, even if it meant leaving his fans behind.

"I can't sacrifice my personal researches for the satisfaction of my fans," he said. "Honestly, this is not possible, that would be cheating. And really, I couldn't. I've had too many problems in following my evolution, on a technical level, to stop along the way under the pretext that it would make a pretty good number of people happy."

Coltrane's search, like the classic 1948 Michael Powell and Emeric Pressberger movie *The Red Shoes*, in which the dancer who wears the red ballet shoes is doomed to dance to their destiny, was becoming increasingly close to real life. In 1960, Coltrane told *DownBeat* that, "I've got to keep experimenting, I feel that I am just beginning. I have part of what I'm looking for, but not all."

His dance in search of the Grail was now advancing headlong to the next phase of his career: the final phase.

Evenings at the Village Gate: John Coltrane with Eric Dolphy **is released on 14 July. See page 49 for our review**

MATT WILDE
HELLO WORLD

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KEEP ON MOVIN'

Adopt, adapt, evolve and most of all, don't stand still – sage advice from London-based trumpeter **Jay Phelps** to young musicians. **Jane Cornwell** is all ears

Jay Phelps is living his best life. The Canadian-born, Deptford-based Renaissance man – trumpeter, bandleader, composer, DJ, educator, broadcaster and CEO – is just 41 and has just released his seventh solo album *The Now*, which is already getting its flowers (see *Jazzwise* 284). He's the first jazz signing to the Apple-owned Platoon label, whose creative and financial support has allowed him to devise a multi-media campaign befitting the album's winning blend of conservatoire-trained chops, edgy flair and intergalactic vibes.

"I was able to find an animator to [illustrate] my vision of 'Through the Clouds'," says Phelps, of one of six long-playing tracks, a funk-laced, heavy riffing ride augmented by the plaintive vocals and double-time flows of Birmingham-based MC, Simon Jnr. "As soon as I heard the lyrics 'through the clouds' I saw the imagery. I thought, 'I want a spaceship going through the clouds and I want my name on it'."

Such interstellar runnings are heightened by a line-up that includes keys wizard Nicola Guida, bassist Menelik Claffey and multi-instrumentalist David Mrakpor on vibes. And indeed by the track 'Finding Centaurii', a piece sparked by Phelp's view from his sixth-floor apartment: "I was watching all these planes flying in and out of Gatwick or wherever, about 14 of them in different places in the sky, and I made a random melody while I thought of them trying to find Alpha Centaurii, the closest star system to us."

Phelps is Zooming from an island in Greece, where he's on Cloud Nine after wedding his long-time-love by the sea, surrounded by friends and family. He looks tanned and relaxed; he says he usually works seven days a week, creating, shedding, cooking ideas. He's long been a pillar of the London jazz scene, and a familiar face at jams in London and Birmingham, the home of his good friends, saxophonist Soweto Kinch and Xhosa Cole (in whose band he played Larry Young's Blue Note masterpiece *Unity* at the Vortex in 2020).

Back in the day, though not as far back as 2007, when the Trinity College graduate (Honours in Jazz Theory and Performance) founded and co-led jazz influencers Empirical (whose bebop driven funk, soul and R&B-flecked debut was produced by Courtney Pine), he helmed sessions at the Waterloo Brasserie, then owned by Ronnie Scott's Sally Greene.

"We were up on the standards from the 1950s, which seemed to matter a lot," says Phelps, who over the course of a two decade career has worked with heavyweights including Wynton Marsalis, George Benson, Hugh Masekela and Mighty Sparrow. "But my generation of musicians can get stuck in their ways and forget about other aspects of music, like entertainment. For a long time I was quite insular, wanting people to listen as the music evolved. Now I don't mind people jumping around and dancing a bit more."

Which, with a trumpet-led sound laced with rap, soul, electronics, baile funk and on *The Now*, four-to-the-floor Detroit House, is inevitable.

"I've been DJing a lot, and get asked to jam with the kiddos at sessions at the Vortex or Patterns at NT's Loft. I want to hear the sounds that are out there. Jazz is almost becoming a redundant category because it's so vast. There are so many layers to it now."

He pauses, and grins. "But it is still a good starting point," he continues.

Take 'The Malleables', an eight-minute-plus 'meta-track' that was birthed toward the end of the day at Fish Factory Studios, Dollis Hill (where *The Now* was recorded before the deal with Platoon). Phelps threw out a simple melody and invited his musicians to jam around it: "So drummer Sasha Create (aka Jack Robson) started making this incredible beat that sounded like two drummers. As a result of everyone knowing the current terrain of jamming and [having] rhythmical and harmonic understanding, we were able to fuse together a very powerful song with this Avengers-style energy we'd generated."

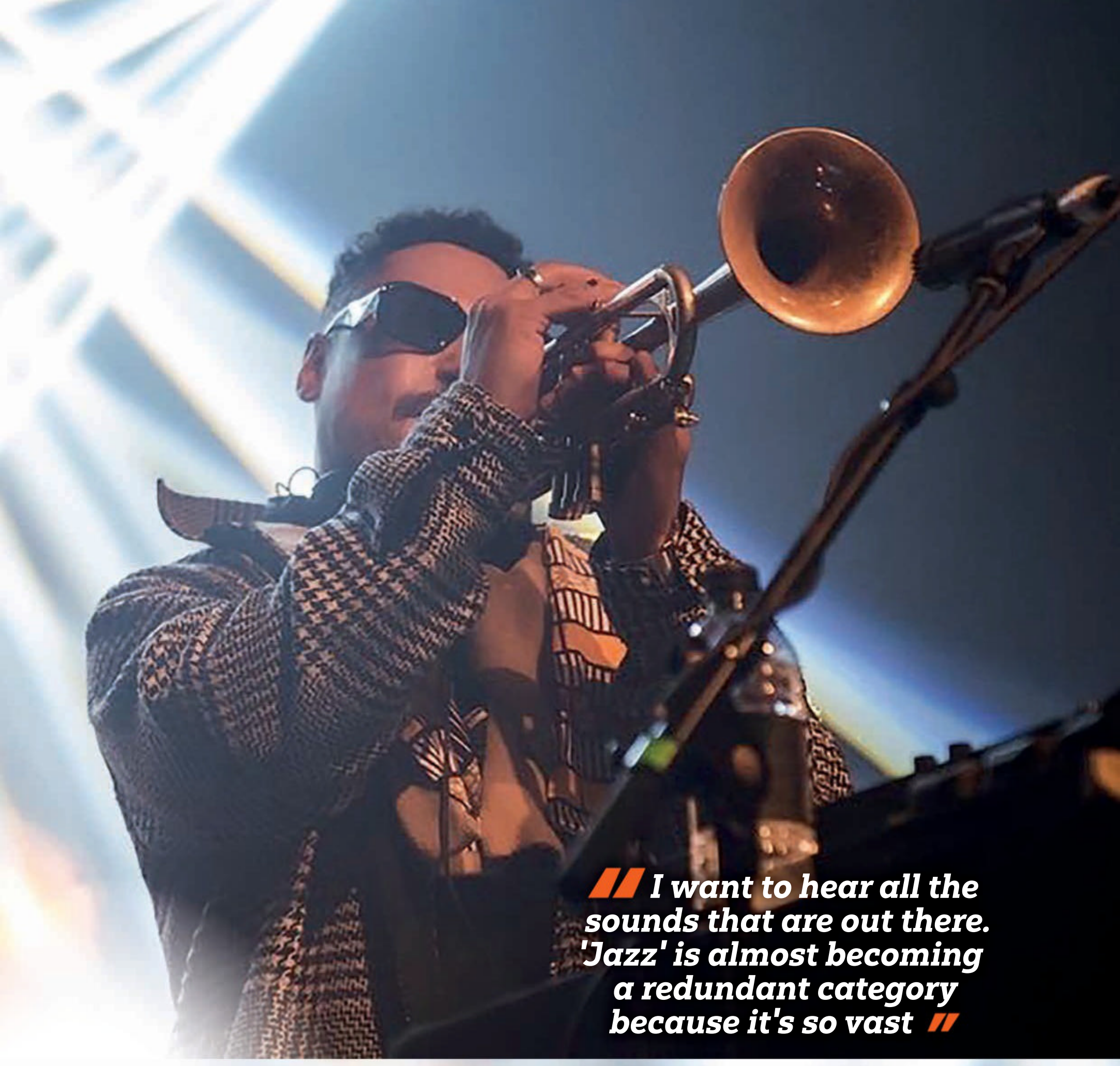
Another smile. "There's all this creativity going on; the video has some of my friends in costumes, and the eight-year-old son of a friend, a little Spider Man, doing back flips all over the place. It's fun and cool."

He cast the video himself, since – as founder and chief executive of SoulEndvr, a casting agency with, among others, musicians and artists of colour on its books (talents include saxophonist Camilla George, singer Juanita Euka, pianist Deschanel Gordon) – that is also what he does (*Soul Endvr* is also the title of his 2019 album on Ubuntu, which has a track titled 'Everyone's Ethnic'). His client list spans Netflix, HBO, Amazon Prime and BBC, with whom he recently worked on a recording of *CBeebies: Twelfth Night* at the Globe Theatre.

He attributes his entrepreneurial spirit to his mother Danielle (who brought the then 17-year-old Jay with her to London when she married trombonist Dennis Rollins), who while encouraging his career, felt it was imperative to have side hustles. "Before the pandemic, whenever someone of colour was needed to play the trumpet in a film or TV show I'd get a call. When the music supervisor of *The Crown* asked me if I knew any other urban musicians" – he grimaces at the description – "I thought, 'Why am I always getting my friends work and not being paid for it? Why are we not on their books?

"The rhetoric of 'uneducated folk' keeps coming up," continues Phelps, who runs the company with Tara Wakefield, a business partner with a legal background. "Through SoulEndvr I booked 10 musicians for HBO's

Photo: courtesy Muphovi



> ***"I want to hear all the sounds that are out there. 'Jazz' is almost becoming a redundant category because it's so vast"***

Landscapers, and was asked if the oboe player would mind cutting their dreadlocks off and putting them back on afterwards! This stuff needs to be carefully handled onscreen and off."

Phelps has broached such topics on his YouTube documentary series *Ear to the Ground*, which features interviews in varied locales with artists from the jazz scene in the UK and beyond. He got a feel for the format while presenting a show on the now-defunct Worldwide FM: "I decided to keep going myself, interviewing people who I think should be promoted more, so I bought the iPhone 14 and did the editing on Final Cut Pro. I went to the local Caribbean takeaway with Mark Kavuma, had a cup of tea with Jelly Cleaver. My next subject is the amazing alto saxophonist Logan Richardson, and there's more in the kitty."

So what advice would he give to aspiring jazzers? To those who rode the first crazy wave of the 'Young British Jazz Scene', and find that they're less marketable now?

"You've gotta keep moving," he says. "Someone like Miles, you can never pin him down to anything. Quincy Jones is constantly evolving. My mind isn't just thinking 'Charlie Parker', I'm onto the next thing. London is an amazing city for meeting so many different people and suddenly you're, 'Let's go with that'!"

The blue Aegean is sparkling over his shoulder, a reminder that Phelps is actually on his honeymoon. I ask if there's anything he'd like to add, and it turns out there is: "I am thrilled that *The Now* has been released, an album led by a trumpet player. But I would really like to see me and my fellow trumpet players in the UK get a better look in because, you know, it's all going to the saxophonists and drummers and piano players." We list some of the trumpet talent currently about, and he flashes a grin.

"Trumpeters of the world, unite!" he says, and means it.

CALL COBBS AND HIS USP

(A UNIQUE KEYBOARD JOURNEY)

Harpsichord in jazz? What a crazy idea, said people when **Albert Ayler** recorded with this eighteenth-century instrument. But whose idea was it? And who was Ayler's influential Harlem friend? **VAL WILMER** has the answers – and the photographs

Recording for Bernard Stollman's ESP-Disk label in 1965, saxophonist Albert Ayler chose to feature a harpsichord on the album, *Spirits Rejoice!* It was played by pianist Call Cobbs, "a school music teacher type," according to drummer Sunny Murray; but a man with a solid jazz history nonetheless.

Cobbs was lodging with Ayler's cousin in Harlem when the saxophonist joined the household on St Nicholas Avenue. The two men were separated by a generation, but despite this, friendship blossomed, and for six years they enjoyed an intermittent working relationship.

There were obvious anomalies when it came to their musical approach, but Cobbs was genuinely interested in what Ayler was doing. As for Ayler, he learnt from the wisdom of an older man and appreciated his loyalty, too. "He was always there when Al needed him," said saxophonist Charles Tyler.

Ayler had originally wanted Cobbs to play vibraphone on *Spirits Rejoice!* until Cobbs explained that the 18th century harpsichord was the original piano.

> ***"Ayler had wanted Cobbs to play vibes until Cobbs explained that the 18th century harpsichord was the original piano"***

Stollman was persuaded to hire one for the date, and the single track, 'Angels', resulted. That it was poorly recorded, was no matter: Cobbs now had a USP in jazz history. He went on to play electronic harpsichord on two further Ayler dates, both for the Impulse! label: *Love Cry*, with Milford Graves on drums; and *New Grass*, where he also played electronic organ.

Earlier examples of jazz on the harpsichord included outings by Errol Garner, by boogie-woogie specialist Meade Lux Lewis, and by Johnny Guarnieri, featured with bandleader Artie Shaw. The instrument had a history in popular music, too. Rosemary Clooney's 1951 hit 'Come On-a my House' spotlighted Stan Freeman's jolly jingle-jangling, inspiring some positive remarks from Bob Dylan, only recently. And in 1965, the same year Ayler recorded *Spirits Rejoice!*, the Yardbirds, with Eric Clapton on guitar, used a harpsichord on 'For Your Love', reportedly inspired by Eartha Kitt's cynically vampish 'Old-Fashioned Girl'.

In July 1970, less than five months before his untimely death, Ayler took Cobbs to southern France for some concerts. The band performed in St-Paul-de-Vence for the Nuits de la Fondation Maeght, and included a rocking blues in their programme. This time, Cobbs stuck to piano, the instrument on which he first recorded with Ayler in 1964, for a posthumously released album of spirituals.

A letter from Ayler scholar Richard Koloda set me remembering Call Cobbs. Koloda and I were often in touch while he was working on *Holy Ghost*, his study of Ayler's career, and he would send me snippets of research. Knowing of my interest in Cobbs – I was the only person to interview him – he sent me a page from the pianist's High School yearbook. Middletown Technical High in Ohio in 1929 was racially-mixed and co-educational, surely something of a rarity in the USA at that date. The Yearbook acknowledged Cobbs's skill at "tickling the ivories", while noting membership of the school orchestra.

At 18, Cobbs looks impossibly young and innocent in his photograph. It is hard to associate him with the skinny, white-haired gentleman I met in New York in the early summer of 1971. However, looking back, the man I got to know, albeit briefly, did have an unusual air of openness about him, even after having spent a lifetime in jazz. Bernard Stollman gave me

Call Cobbs, New York City, 1971

Photo Val Wilmer

Left: Johnny Hodges, rehearsing for Granada TV, Chelsea 1963; below: Art Farmer rehearsing for *Jazz 625*, BBC London 1964; bottom: Albert and Donald Ayler, Harlem, 1966

his number. We met for a stroll on the Upper West Side before sitting down to talk by the river. I found an enchanting person who was amazed that anyone wanted to interview him.

He was born Harvey Call Cobbs Jr on 30 January 1911 in Urbana, Indiana, with a father from Virginia and a mother from Ohio. He grew up in Ohio where his father was a church janitor, and had a religious upbringing. He began his career in Cincinnatti, dropping his first name to join Kenny Clarke, later considered the father of bebop drumming. Clarke took him to New York where they formed a trio with Clarke's brother, Frank, on bass, before Cobbs left them to work as a guide to Art Tatum, the barely-sighted piano virtuoso. He spent 11 months in this role then joined the big band of Lucky Millinder.

Following the Second World War and army service, he moved to California where he worked for Norman Granz, the socially radical promoter. He accompanied Billie Holiday, and worked with other great names in jazz between playing solo gigs in bars and hotels. He played jump blues with Louis Jordan's band and in 1954 was a member of saxophonist Johnny Hodges' band that also included John Coltrane and Duke Ellington's ineffable trombonist Lawrence Brown. Not long before his death, Coltrane played the Apollo in Harlem. Cobbs went backstage to be greeted with a bear hug before Coltrane laid down on the dressing-room couch and closed his eyes. "Please don't think I'm being indifferent," he told Cobbs. "Please keep on talking. I'm just so tired."

Because Cobbs' name was unknown to jazz scholars at the time, some doubt was expressed when I wrote a piece about him in *Melody Maker* and mentioned his Tatum and Holiday connections. His claim to have played with saxophonist Wardell Gray was disputed, too, but as it happened, trumpeter Art Farmer, a colleague in the same 1952 quartet, was in New York at the time of our meeting. I arranged for the pair to renew their acquaintance.

The three of us met in a bar on the Upper West Side, not far from Harlem, and spent a delightful afternoon together, drinking beer and reminiscing. I did little but sit and listen as the two men talked, feeling not for the first time how fortunate I was to be able to touch the musicians' world where fame is relative, and doing the thing is what matters.

There was one further meeting, in a very different setting. Every Sunday, Cobbs played for parishioners at Divine Teaching, a little church on 125th Street near Madison Avenue. I joined a handful of people gathered in an upper room to sing hymns and testify, with Cobbs accompanying them on a piano that had seen better days. Afterwards we walked east to another church, an impressive stone structure on one of the Avenues. This was one of several such buildings inherited from white congregations when African-Americans started moving into the district in the early twentieth century.

Lunch was served in the basement there once a week, all-comers welcome. As we put paid to the generous helpings of candied yams, greens and fried chicken, Call told me that he felt blessed to have made our acquaintance, a sentiment I could only echo.

In July, I went back to England. I planned to conduct an extended interview with him on my return, but when I called his phone number in September, I was told, "Call Cobbs is no longer living." Thinking I had heard wrongly, I rang back, only to discover that he had been killed in a hit-and-run accident just days previously, not far from the bar where we spent the afternoon with Art Farmer.

I passed on the sad news to *DownBeat* and the magazine published an obituary. I wrote Call's entry for *The Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, but have since uncovered further details of his career. During his period in California, he accompanied the singer Lena Horne and worked with the big band of trombonist and slide saxophonist Snub Mosley. In 1946 he recorded with booting tenor saxophonist Jack McVea, with early associate Frank Clarke on bass. He formed a trio with double bassist Billy Hadnott and Johnny Creach, the violinist known subsequently as Papa John Creach in the latter days of the innovative San Francisco group Jefferson Airplane, and he continued the solo residencies – often, so the adverts stated, on 'the spinet'.

Intrigued, especially given the harpsichord connection, I explored further, only to be disappointed to discover that this is an American name for a miniature piano, rather than the wing-shaped instrument of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Cobbs returned east in the 1960s . He played jazz in New York with musicians including guitarist Les Spann, and even did some acting. Albert Ayler was not his only connection with a storied free jazz name. In 1964, around the time of the October Revolution in Music, he worked in Atlantic City with David Izenzon, double bassist with Ornette Coleman's trio, and a singer named Mary Ellen Bell. ·

Whether this was a hitherto undocumented exercise in free improvisation or just a cocktail gig remains unknown.

To Call Cobbs Jr, journeyman musician, it would undoubtably have been all one and the same. As he told me, it was a pleasure just to be making music.

Photos: Val Wilmer

TURNING POINT

“It’s the commitment to the moment, and the spirit, the energy, the passion…”

American drummer **Mark Guiliana** tells **Brian Glasser** about how an encounter with a classic Coltrane album set him on the path to jazz glory

“It feels clichéd, but it’s *A Love Supreme*! I was probably 17 [when I first heard it]. I was introduced to jazz in high school, and it was quite often through the drummer. There was a big band, and in my private drum lessons I was being exposed to guys like Tony Williams and Roy Haynes.

Trying to do my homework and learn more about this music, I checked out John Coltrane, and so heard Elvin Jones. I didn’t understand him, but I knew there was really something special. So, okay - I need to check out Elvin, so I need to buy some records; and that was when I found *A Love Supreme*. Now, I would say it’s probably the record I’ve listened to the most times in my life. I have the record cover framed next to my drums where I practise.

To this day, it continues to be a deep source of inspiration and I find new stuff every time I listen to it. I get joy out of listening to the album in a wide variety of environments – from headphones, to vinyl, to the car.

I love the way the drums sound coming off the vinyl, the way they were recorded: the sound in that room, and what happens to the cymbals in particular, the natural compression. It’s just really satisfying to me! The stereo version allows you to pan things left and right [but it sounds a bit unnatural], but I prefer the mono recording and I love the sound of mono generally.

With all the travelling I do, most of the listening I do is digitally and on headphones; and again I prefer the mono version so that all of the sound is in both ears. I always felt it was a bit unnatural if an instrument is only in one ear, because by definition it can’t be in real life!

Also, I reach for the album partly because it’s a safe place for me when it’s been a long day, we’ve had two flights, whatever. I consistently feel transported by the music.

Music can enter your body in different ways: sometimes it comes in to your brain, and stops there. Sometimes it goes from your brain to your gut. Sometimes it just goes to your gut. And sometimes it goes to your gut and then goes to your brain.

For me, now it’s in both; but, even at 17, it came in to my gut – and I think that’s where most connection happens. It’s visceral – who cares if I don’t know about the details of what they’re doing? It’s making my body feel a certain way…

Wrongly – let me stress! – at the age of 17, jazz lived more in my brain. I was into Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, and those rock bands who were all gut feeling and energy. When I met jazz, it was exactly the opposite, it was all brain – thinking, and theory, and ‘sophistication’. That’s being 17!

A Love Supreme helped me see jazz as more of a visceral, powerful music that can come from the gut and get to people that way – not only through the brain. So it helped me destroy walls that I had built between styles previously and continues to be a barometer for me of that - as something to aim for, emotionally.

I love that it [the album] is a complete statement. I am in awe of ‘Trane’s vision from beginning to end. If you’ve ever seen that chart he wrote out, there’s this horizontal sheet of staff paper with a combination of notes but mostly words – he kind of writes out the record; and it’s stunning.

That kind of vision before it gets recorded is incredible. Like I said earlier, the way I got my foot in the door to this album was through Elvin; but then Coltrane became one of my favourite musicians – the sound he gets from the saxophone, I can feel the dedication to his instrument, the dedication in his life to music and what it means to him, it’s everything; and the way that comes through in every phrase.

This is consistently the case with him – the commitment to the moment, and the spirit, the energy, the passion. So, content aside, even if that were the only message, I think it’s a beautiful message. I’d like to believe it’s something that anyone would hope to strive for, no matter what you do: to find that level in whatever you feel passionate about.

That’s what he represents for me - a reminder of what’s possible in music or if you dedicate your life to something.”

John Coltrane
A Love Supreme
Impulse! (1965)
PERSONNEL: John Coltrane (ts); McCoy Tyner (p), Jimmy Garrison (b), and Elvin Jones (d, perc).
TRACKS: ‘Part 1: Acknowledgement’, ‘Part 2: Resolution’, ‘Part 3: Pursuance’ and ‘Part 4: Psalm’

Albums: New Releases

The UK's most definitive review section – Jazz and beyond

★★★★★ Landmark Recording ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Disappointing

Tony Allen
Jazz Is Dead 18

Jazz Is Dead JID 018 (CD, LP, DL) ★★

Tony Allen (d), Adrian Younge, Ali-Shaheed Muhammad (prod, instruments), plus various guests. Rec. date not stated

The passing of Tony Allen in 2020 robbed contemporary music of one of its finest rhythm masters. His supreme control of pulse, which pulled off the feat of being laser-precise, all the while feeling effortlessly leisurely, made him a cornerstone of Afrobeat and modern dance genres. This Jazz Is Dead session rightly foregrounds his skill but the eight tracks on offer, recorded under the aegis of the label's producers Adrian Younge and Al Shaheed-Muhamad and sundry musicians, do little to enhance Allen's legacy. For the most part, the drummer is typically appealing but the material is too pedestrian, as there is not sufficient rhythmic variation or shift of dynamics around the steady backbeats, to the extent that the songs feel like loose jams that sadly lack a vital spark of spontaneity or an exchange of ideas that raises the energy to another level. Although well-engineered and embellished by some smart bursts of horns and keyboards, the music does not have a convincing sense of singularity. Things more or less lift off on 'Oladipo', with its passing Ethiopiques flavour, but it's not the case elsewhere, meaning we can appreciate the sound of Tony Allen rather than his music. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Tony Allen

Nanny Assis
Rovanio: The Music of Nanny Assis

IN+OUT IORCD 77152-2 (CD, LP) ★★★

Nanny Assis (v, perc), Randy Brecker (t), Lakecia Benjamin, Igor Butman (as), John Ellis (ss, as), Mattan Klein (f), Fred Hersch (p), Chico Pinheiro (g), Vinicius Cantuaria (v, g), Ron Carter, Jorge Helder (b), Ulysses Owens, Jr, Rafael Barata (d), Laercio Da Costa, Kainã Do Jêje, Marcio Brasil, Liuzonho Do Jêje (perc), Dani Assis, Laura Assis, Janis Siegel (v) and St Petersburg Studio Orchestra (strings). Rec. August 2021 and January 2022

Born in Salvador, Bahia in the northeast of Brazil in 1979, Assis came to the United States in 1993 as a percussionist with Rolling Thunder, and then settled in New York where he became a renowned samba and Brazilian jazz player.

This is only the second album he's made as leader, and he gathered together both music and musicians he admired, to explore the interstices between jazz and Brazilian music. On all but one track, Ron Carter provides a subtle and always sympathetic bass foundation, as well as contributing his piece 'Mr Bow Tie' to the repertoire, reimagined by Assis as 'No Agora' (and also including some fine playing from Randy Brecker). Carter is at his best on the minimalist setting of 'Manha De Carnaval', and Fred Hersch shines on the equally Spartan 'Proponho' with guest vocalist Janis Siegel of Manhattan Transfer fame. Nanny's daughter Laura proves herself no mean vocalist on Morrie Louden's song 'Insensatez' (not the Jobim standard). The three tracks with string orchestra recorded in St Petersburg, Russia (before the beginning of the recent conflict), bring a much wider scale and scope to the music, but Assis' strongest suit is his intimate chamber style that harks back to Jobim and Gilberto. The closing 'Intimate Acquaintances' captures this perfectly, not least as flautist Mattan Klein brings a quiet and gentle ingredient to the mix. **Alyn Shipton**

Azamiah
In Phases

Rebecca's Records REBREC2LP (LP, DL) ★★★

India Blue (v), Josef Akin (ky), Norman Villeroux (b, ocarina), Alex Palmer (d), Romy Wymer (hp), Finn Rosenbaum (perc), Liam Shortall (tb) and Mateusz Sobieski (ts). Rec. 2021

There's a load of really interesting jazz coming out of Scotland, and more specifically Glasgow, at the moment. If you missed Stuart Nicholson's primer on the past, present and future of jazz north of the border in the March edition of *Jazzwise*, you can read his guide online. One of the key players is DJ, producer and now label boss Rebecca Vasmant, with five-piece Glasgow-based group Azamiah's debut album the second record on her label, Rebecca's Records. It's been a long time coming; recorded in summer 2021, it finally sees the light of day two years later.

Led by vocalist India Blue, *In Phases* takes a woozy path through expansive, roomy jazz and R&B. Everything is shrouded in a haze, but there's risk-taking underneath that – 'Half-Man' has hints of the Hiatus Kaiyote's expansive arrangements and metre-shirking modulations; the attractive lop-sized riff on 'Celesta' and the careful integration of harp and ocarina into the textures throughout shows there's real thought going on here.

In Phases could be a good deal shorter without detracting from the overall picture, but lots of fun ideas are introduced, and it serves as more evidence of Glasgow's current jazz prowess. Meanwhile, Azamiah play perfect mid-afternoon festival music – expect them at one of those slots sometime soon. **Hugh Morris**

Roni Ben-Hur
Love Letters

Mighty Quinn Records (DL) ★★★

Roni Ben-Hur (g), Ingrid Jensen (t), Ugonna Okegwo (b) and Jason Tieman (d). Rec. date not stated

The clue's kind of in the title: after decades in the business as a respected performer and educator, Ben-Hur pays back in spades the love and gratitude he feels for friends and musical heroes. The tone's set by the sumptuous swing of 'To Dizzy with Love', a song dedicated not to Gillespie (although Jensen's joyous horn evokes the great man), but pianist Barry Harris.

It was Harris who encouraged the young guitarist when he emigrated from Israel in 1985, mentoring him and then inviting

him into his own band.

Ben-Hur embraced the styles of Hall and Burrell, clean-toned, mellifluously melodic, but most importantly swinging, swinging, swinging. Even on his own meditative, slow tempoed 'Seul a Paris', the swing seduces, helped by Tieman's deft brushes. But it's Jensen's muted horn, evocative of Miles yearning for Juliet Greco, that steals the show.

Jensen and Ben-Hur are long-time collaborators, and their easeful collaboration is a treat: never over-complex, and never stuck in the same voicings. For example, the Brazilian beats of 'Alegria de Viver' brings another feel again. Indeed, it would have been good to get more of Ben-Hur's love of all things Latin; there are only intimations of Baden Powell, one of his Brazilian heroes. Likewise, tapping further into his own Tunisian-Jewish roots may have brought forth even further sweetness. Either way, Ben-Hur remains a touchstone of classic style and swing; and for that deserves our love. **Andy Robson**

Clare Daly
VuVu For Frances

Daly Bread Records (CD, DL)

★★★★

Clare Daly (bs, v), George Garzone (ts), Jon Davis (p, ky), Dave Hofstra (b) and David F Gibson (d). Rec. date not stated

Now 65, Clare Daly, a Berklee graduate and educator, has made quite a name for herself on her native New York scene since specialising on the baritone. Her initial break-through came with Diva, the all-female big band, but since then she's released albums and won awards galore. The titular Frances is a friend who knew the Harlem scene way back, and 'VuVu' simply means 'an airy, melodic sound' and that is exactly what Daly and Garzone dish up here in this tribute to said Frances.

In a 13-track programme largely made up of standards, Daly is the epitome of relaxation and taste, taking a tune like 'Fools Rush in' and simply allowing her billowing, Mulligan-esque sound to work its magic. When Garzone comes in, he's equally measured, clearly enjoying the chance to play great melodies without any overt need to veer towards the avant-garde although 'The Lonely Goatherd' does turn into a lively romp. The two horns harmonise quite beautifully on 'Mood Indigo' and elsewhere, Daly's treatment of 'Warm Valley', her friend's favourite Ellington piece, particularly pleasing as it's combined with an uppish 'What Am I Here For', each principal improvising forcefully but without bombast. Davis knows how to complement the mood as on 'I'll Take Manhattan', which he re-invents stylishly, Garzone sidling in as Daly builds on the melody, with bass and drums happy to take things easy or assert themselves as necessary. Rest assured this is likeable, engaging music. **Peter Vacher**

Louise Dodds and Elchin Shirinov
Two Hours After Midnight

Loch Tay Records LT001 (CD, DL)

★★★★

Louise Dodds (v) and Elchin Shirinov (p). Rec. date not stated

Named after the powerful final letter Mary, Queen of Scots wrote to the King of France, her brother-in-law Henri III, hours before her execution, and which she signed "This Wednesday, two hours after midnight", this wonderful duet album from Scottish vocalist Louise Dodds and Azerbaijan-born pianist Elchin Shirinov presents eight beautifully-reimagined traditional Scottish folk songs. Dodds, a Best Vocalist nominee at the Scottish Jazz Awards 2022 and Shirinov, a member of bassist Avishai Cohen's trio from 2018-2022, dig deep into their chosen repertoire, with Shirinov's inventive reharmonisations casting new light on songs ranging from 'Comin Thro The Rye' (the inspiration, incidentally, for the title of JD Salinger's classic 1951 novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*) to Robert Burn's best-known song, 'Auld Lang Syne'.

Gently propelled by Shirinov's hypnotically repeating left-hand ostinato, the duo's take on the 'Loch Tay Boat Song' ("She's my beauteous nighean ruadh, She's my joy and sorrow too") mark it out as one of the great songs of unrequited love. Also known as the 'The Banks O' Doon', Dodds casts a spell with 'Ye Banks and Braes', a Burns song of seduction and abandonment which features Shirinov's limpid accompaniment and a final, unresolved chord which is left hanging in the air like a question mark. Other highlights include a poignant and tender setting of Charles Gray's 'Oh True Love is a Bonnie Flower', plus a gorgeous reading of Lady Carolina Nairne's 'Lass o' Gowrie'. **Peter Quinn**

Mark Dresser
Tines Of Change

Pyroclastic PR 25 (CD, DL) ★★★

Mark Dresser (b). Rec. 21 July 2019 and 13-14 November 2022

Through a lengthy tenure in Anthony Braxton's 1980s/90s quartet and collaborations with arch conceptualists such as Henry Threadgill and John Zorn, bassist Mark Dresser has established himself as a deep thinker with an abiding commitment to expanding the palette of his instrument. On this questing solo date, he ups his game considerably by employing some unconventional gear that opens up an array of extended techniques and unexpected sounds.

Across a dozen improvisations, he plays custom-built four- and five-string double basses with metal tines [prongs] attached to a secondary bridge, which, when plucked, provide metallic twangs and, when bowed, summon ethereal, flute-like trills and hums. At the same time, extra pickups added to the fingerboard enable him to sound up to three pitches on each string, creating rich, multi-phonic harmonies while amplifying delicate phantom tones and timbres.

These modifications effectively transform the bass into a teeming compendium of sonic possibilities.

If that sounds gimmicky, Dresser adroitly sidesteps the temptation to draw undue attention to the technology and folds all this newly unlocked vocabulary into precise, measured and, above all, patiently melodic explorations. **Daniel Spicer**

Andy Emler Megaoctet
No Rush!

La Buissone RJAL397044 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Andy Emler (p), Laurent Blondiau (t), Philippe Sellam (as), Guillaume Orti (as), Laurent Dehors (ts, bc), Francois Thuillier (tuba, saxophone horn), Francois Verly (perc), Eric Echampard (d), Claude Tchamitchian (b) and Nguyên Lê (g). Rec. 30–31 August 2021

Heading into his ninth Megaoctet album in 30 years, why would French pianist/composer Andy Emler be in a hurry? That said, the title track actually heads off at a fair old pace, with Emler's piano and Francoise Verly's drumming setting a brisk undertow against the corrective swooning of wind instruments. As the two forces negotiate, Laurent Blondiau mediates with a long, scrabbling trumpet solo - one of his many impressive contributions to the album.

Emler's compositional formula often involves a counterpoint of rhythmic groove against almost classically complex arrangements over which one or more players freely improvise. There's a keen sense that he writes to the strengths of the ensemble members while his own piano contributions are more diffidently deployed to bring the whole together. And when it comes together the sound can be truly orchestral, worthy of a full-strength big band. That powerful full effect is used judiciously, however, often sandwiched between quiet duo or trio passages exploring the textural permutations on offer.

After three decades there's an irony to calling a tune 'Just A Beginning', especially when it heralds the return of original member guitarist Nguyên Lê as a guest. After an intricately written ensemble opening section, Lê's twanging solo guitar wavers over the tuba's droning bass rasp, growing in assertion and range as the piece builds in response. The score eventually shifts into a full-strength onslaught behind his frenzied fretwork before collapsing to leave a reflective piano and a distant slide guitar. It's a brilliant piece of writing that showcases the collective empathy between band and bandleader in a project that knows exactly where it is going. **Tony Benjamin**

Alex Flood
Oscillate

Jakarta Records 183 (LP, DL) ★★★

Alexander Flood (d, perc, v), Horatio Luna (b), Àbáse, Lewis Moody (ky), Paulo Cedraz (f, perc) and Joel Prime (perc). Rec. July 2022

But is it jazz? "This is dance music," announces the note accompanying the title track of *Oscillate*, the third album from Australian drummer and bandleader Alex Flood. It's certainly quite a challenge to listen to the six tracks and not find yourself being moved first and foremost by the different beats and rhythms provided by Flood, from the shuffling broken beats on that opening title track, via the jungle and drum 'n' bass inspirations of 'U R THA 1' and the percussive elaborations of 'Berlin' ('one... for the House heads'), through to the funky groove of closer 'Hüpf', which means 'bounce' in German, appropriately for a track said to have been 'written to make your head bounce'. Recorded in mid-July 2022 at Jazzanova Studios in Berlin, the album features fine lyrical and trancy jazz flute from Brazilian musician Paulo Cedraz, sonorous synth work from Hungarian keyboard player Àbáse, and infectiously funky bass from Flood's fellow Australian Horatio Luna. So, is it jazz? Dance jazz, perhaps – play it back to back with some Glenn Miller and marvel at the changes a century has wrought.

Robert Shore

The Full Circle Quartet
The South Downs Suite

New Leaf NL003 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Josephine Davies (ts, ss), Joss Peach (p, v, perc), Terry Pack (b, v), Angus Bishop (d, perc) with Kate Hogg (flhn, af) and Michelle Andrews (b-flat cl, bcl).
Rec. 1–2 November 2022

There is a happy tradition of pastoral celebration not just in British classical music, but in jazz as well. Recently we've had James Kitchman evoking his beloved Northumberland on *Rain Shadows* with Bruno Heinem, while Kate Westbrook's Granite band is embued with the soul of Dartmoor and the West country. The Full Circle Quartet takes the concept several steps beyond, however.

Poetry and books of painting are hard behind this release plus a follow up of ensemble pieces. And all based on a vivid vision of the sights, sounds and nature of the South Downs. There are generic songs, such as the subtle awakening of 'Oasis' or the fittingly flighty 'Dance of the Dragonfly' by Davies. But there's site specific songs too, like the moodily beautiful 'Seven Sisters' inspired by the chalk cliffs of the East Sussex coast.

But the suite's not all bucolic romanticism. Indeed, much of the music was born from the band's experiences of lockdown, a mix of isolation, awe and awareness of nature's indifference to humanity. All the members compose, and the band plays with great service to the music. But it's hard not to single out Davies, nightingale blithe on soprano and variously dark toned, even vicious on tenor. We're lucky to be witnessing a generation of saxophonists like Davies, Trish Clowes, Tori Freestone and newer stars like Emma Rawicz and Asha Parkinson bringing a fresher sensibility to Adolphe's invention. **Andy Robson**

Polly Gibbons
As It Is

Pastiche Records (LP, DL) ★★★★

Polly Gibbons (v, p), plus various personnel including Al Cherry (g), Ross Stanley (ky), James Pearson (p), Loz Garratt (b) and James Maddren (d). Rec. 2022

This first all-original collection from vocalist and songwriter Polly Gibbons, her ninth studio album, provides an ideal showcase for her capacious musical imagination. Arranged and produced by Gibbons and co-produced by her long-time, esteemed musical collaborator, James Pearson, it seamlessly draws together all of Gibbons' musical loves, from soul and gospel to jazz and R&B.

'Disappointed' vibrates between the sinuous funk of its verse, where an offbeat unison keys/guitar line is overlaid with shimmering Hammond organ interjections, and the suddenly blossoming, stacked vocal harmonies of the chorus. The album strikes its most personal note with 'Man of Moderation', a soulful paean to Gibbons' father which tugs at the heartstrings.

There are some lovely, ear-catching textural details too, not least the a cappella coda which lights up 'It's Hard To Love', the sorrowing, introductory brass chorale of 'Melonpolly', and the agitated, slightly detuned synth line which weaves its way through the stream-of-consciousness 'The Hare and the Toilet Seat' ("I see a hare, on a chocolate brown field, with a rainbow behind it"). The album closes with the optimistic, life-affirming blast of 'Towards the Sun'. Recorded at Old Jet studios in Gibbons' native Suffolk, the album captures her many-sided artistry to perfection. **Peter Quinn**

Terry Gibbs Legacy Band
The Terry Gibbs Songbook

Whaling City Sound WCS 134 (CD)
★★★

Scott Hamilton, Harry Allen (ts), Tom Ranier (ts, p, arr), Terry Gibbs (two-finger p, v), Mike Gurrola (b), Gerry Gibbs (d) and Danny Bacher (v). Rec. 27 December 2022

Rather remarkably, Terry Gibbs, the celebrated vibist and bandleader, is still with us at the great age of 98 – and alert enough to participate in this warm-hearted tribute to his other talent, that of songwriting. All 15 compositions here are his, each melodically strong, with lyrics added by various Hollywood specialists.

Some are a tad saccharine in tone and narrative style, but they all swing, and that was always TG's preferred way to play. His son, the fine drummer Gerry G., corralled this Legacy ensemble, sensibly enlisting Hamilton, and Allen since they echo his dad's preference for tenormen who sound like Lester Young, with Ranier contributing nicely made charts and crisp piano, supported by occasional synth underlays.

The tenorists solo or accompany as each piece dictates and they sound just fine, both relaxed and at ease, Allen the more urgent, Hamilton behind the beat, his tone the warmer of the two. Typically, 'Let's Go To Rio' has them both on call, each soloing with commendable zest, echoing the song's breezy story line.

Hamilton is especially good on Gibbs' ballads, notably on 'If I Were You' with its recall of lost love. 'Play And Sing' has Ranier fleshing out the ensemble on trumpet, and is a brightly zippy piece, everyone on form. *Jazz Times* Best Male Vocalist Bacher handles the lyrics much in the manner of Harry Connick, and enjoys a few nostalgic exchanges with Terry G on the feisty 'Now's The Time To Groove' with the great man adding his two-finger piano.

Said to be Terry G's last-ever album appearance after eight decades of making records, it was certainly a swinging affair with classy playing from all concerned. Bravo, Terry!

Peter Vacher

Joel Goodman
An Exquisite Moment

A64 Records (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Joel Goodman (ky, b), Randy Brecker (flhn, t), Brandee Younger (hp), Scott Tibbs (p), Lisa Fischer (v), John Patitucci, Scott Colley (b), Philippe Saisse (p, vb, mba), Donny McCaslin (ts), Eric Harland (d), Adam Rogers (g), Mino Cinelu (perc), Joe Mardin (snare drum, cymbals), Marcus Rojas (tba), Bobby Shulgold (f), Brian Scanlon (as, cl), Phil O'Connor (cl, bcl), Charlie Morillas (tb), Kat Robertson (concertmaster), Philip Vaiman, Wynton Grant, Sharon Jackson, Erika Walczak, Yihuan Zhao (vn), Matt Nabours, Karolina Naziemiec and Drew Forde (vla). Rec. date not stated

Joel Goodman may not be familiar name in the jazz press, but the cast list of this album, his debut under his own name, certainly contains a fair share of NYC big hitters. Goodman has made a very successful career for himself as a provider of music for other people, writing and scoring for hundreds of documentaries and adverts, picking up an Emmy along the way, and providing other high-end examples of what might be called 'production

music'. Now he's at the helm of his own creative project – a contemporary fusion of accessible grooves, carefully written melodies and slick group improvisation.

As you might expect, it's heavy on atmosphere, with tracks like 'What Dreamers Dream' and 'Drifting In Wonder' laying down moody, minor-chord textures that are embellished by the considerable talents of Donny McCaslin and John Patitucci. By contrast, 'Rumi And The Whirling Dervish' is a more conventionally punchy jazz-rock affair, with McCaslin and Eric Harland blowing up an absolute fusion storm against a backdrop of raucous guitars and sweeping strings. 'Mystery Of Trees' has some fine Brecker blowing over acoustic guitar, and 'Astral Projection' is a suitably grandiose, lushly orchestrated extended closer with some fine work from guitarist Adam Rogers.

There's lots of room in the engagingly loose structures for terrific playing from all concerned, and Goodman is certainly a master at mood and colour. Top marks for ambition and execution, though as of yet most of the character comes from the participating musicians: Joel Goodman's own distinct musical personality is harder to identify. **Eddie Myer**

Uriel Herman
Different Eyes

Ubuntu UBU0136 (CD, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Uriel Herman (p), Itamar Borochov (t), Uriel Weinberger (ts, f), Avri Borochov (b), Haim Peskoff (d) and Maayan Doari (perc). Rec. 2022

Uriel Herman, the young pianist and composer from Jerusalem, studied classical piano and composition with exalted Israeli conservatoire teachers during the 2000s, but has recently toured the world as a soloist and bandleader in pursuit of an increasingly personal and spontaneously-evolving music. When he released his 2014 debut album, *Awake*, it was evident how far the then 26 year-old Herman had moved from the orthodox roots of his training - songs by Nirvana and Radiohead joined originals framing words by revered Hebrew-language poets Yehuda Amichai and the gifted but short-lived Tirza Attar.

Different Eyes, Herman's third release, and a vivid collage of the sounds of his childhood on Jerusalem streets, mergers of rhythmic and melodic ideas spanning the Middle East, a little Chopin, and a closing lullaby dedicated to his young son – is the most powerful evidence so far of his formidable promise. The gently gliding 'Jerusalem' is a captivating melody for Herman's rippling piano line and Itamar Borochov's trumpet (a breathy confection of the sounds of the brass-playing Avishai Cohen and Arve Henriksen), and a startling cover of 'Nature Boy' opens with thrilling falsetto trumpet leaps before Herman sweeps and curls around the classic theme. Antonio Carlos Jobim's 'Luiza' gets a solo piano treatment flowing between rumination and passion, Nirvana's 'Polly' oscillates between a smoky waltz, a jagged bass-driven groove and a sax-swelling, folk-dancing whirl. If there are any racing certs for the 2023 pollwinners' lists so far, *Different Eyes* sounds like one of the front-runners. **John Fordham**

Photo: Ubuntu Music

Linley Hamilton
Ginger's Hollow

Whirlwind Recordings WR4808 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Linley Hamilton (t), Derek 'Doc' O'Connor (ts), Cian Boylan (p, org), Mark Egan (b) and Adam Nussbaum (d). Rec. May 2022

Linley Hamilton, the Northern Ireland trumpeter, teacher, broadcaster and promoter, is revered in his homeland for his spirited playing, for his tireless advocacy of jazz, and not least for his hosting of an internationally popular jazz venue at his farm in County Down.

Ginger's Hollow - a tribute to a much-missed farm cat - brings together classy Dublin musicians Derek 'Doc' O'Connor on tenor and Cian Boylan on keys (O'Connor and Hamilton were mainstays of the lineup in *The Commitments* movie) with the formidable US rhythm section of Mark Egan and Adam Nussbaum on bass and drums. Hamilton's devotion to buoyant, upbeat jazz is plain from the opening 'Shinebox', with its classic 1960s soul-jazzy hook for the horns over Nussbaum's smacking backbeat, and there's a stomping Crusaders-reminiscent bounce to Cian Boylan's 'Sunday Morning', bookending shapely phrase-swapping solos from Hamilton and O'Connor. The title track is a gracefully gliding Hamilton original underpinned by Boylan's gleaming fluency on Fender Rhodes, while the throbbing 'Place At The Ace' is a highlight, a fastmoving, subtly harmonised tailchase of catchy motifs echoed and overlaid around the band and vivaciouly powered by Egan and Nussbaum. Boylan's 'Jason's Dream' with its pensively lyrical solos from the horns and his own piano poignantly reflects the family bereavement it commemorates.

O'Connor, an engagingly fleet, Michael Breckerish tenorist, fittingly cranks up the temperature on the headlong finale, 'Watch Those Eyes'. There aren't too many surprises on this tracklist perhaps, but they weren't Linley Hamilton's intention: the warmth and expertise this music is played with is unmistakeable. **John Fordham**

David Hazeltine Trio
Blues for Gerry

Criss Cross Jazz 1415 (CD) ★★★★

David Hazeltine (p), Peter Washington (b) and Joe Farnsworth (d). Rec. 1 December 2022

Hazeltine, born 1958 in Milwaukee and a New Yorker by adoption long since, crops up often on albums by his fellow members of the all-star band One For All, while also building a substantial discography of his own as a trio leader. He clearly excels at this and can best be placed as a straight-ahead bebopper, his influences including Oscar Peterson, Barry Harris, and Cedar Walton.

On this evidence, it's less the fulsome style of Peterson that works best for him; more the grown-up bebop orientation of Harris and Walton, the harmonic delving and desire to swing evident throughout this 10-piece programme. After Buddy Montgomery's 'Here Again', he tackles the standard 'Tangerine' filleting its venerable theme skilfully before his title track tribute to Gerry Teekens – the founder of Criss Cross Jazz – which is the most incisive and pleasing performance here. Walton's 'Firm Roots' is taken fast, with Farnsworth featured, this emphasising his value alongside that of Washington, these two senior pros ideal for Hazeltine's purposes. This pianist has the kind of facility and harmonic resource to make this piece a perfect vehicle for pianistic enterprise. In contrast, he then moves on to a swing-era test-piece, 'Body And Soul', his approach far from reverential yet deeply felt.

There's nothing rushed or excessive here; proper keyboard command and a well-stocked harmonic palette make for a series of classy expositions, this epitomised by his 'Minor Disturbance', Washington anchoring things brilliantly. Latter-day jazz piano at its best, with everything from Carmichael's lovely 'Skylark' to Duke Pearson's bossa 'You Know I Care' handled with commendable alacrity and taste. **Peter Vacher**

Daniel Hersog Jazz Orchestra
Open Spaces (Folk Songs Reimagined)

Cellar Music CMR 010123 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Daniel Hersog (cond), Ben Kono (ob, ss, f, cl), Ben Henriques (as, ss, cl), Noah Preminger (ts), Tom Keenlyside (f, af, picc, ts), Scott Robinson (bs, bcl, f), Michael Kim, Brad Turner, Derry Byrne, Jocelyn Waugh (t, flhn), Jeremy Berkman, Jim Hopson, Andrew Porrier, Sharman King (btb), Kurt Rosenwinkel (el g), Frank Carlberg (p), Kim Cass (b) and Dan Weiss (d). Rec. 28–29 May 2022

This is an unusual project by Hersog, a Canadian trumpeter, composer and arranger who is also that rarity, the leader of a contemporary big band. For this, his sophomore release, he's collected some of his favourite folk melodies - with an understanding that 'folk' is a genre encompassing everything from timeless traditional melodies to the likes of Bob Dylan and The Tragically Hip (they're huge in Canada, people) and used them as the basis for a festively hip contemporary big band album that isn't afraid to be square when occasion demands.

Hersog uses the melodies as platforms upon which to construct all kinds of elaborate musical edifices: you can hear nods to Gil Evans in the massed woodwinds and sombre brass, and to Carla Bley and Maria Schneider in some of the complexities of 'I Hear' (which takes in straight swing, free blowing, and episodes of Weimar-era oompah) all delivered impeccably by a truly outstanding ensemble that can handle musical freedom just as readily as the tightest, most subtly nuanced arrangement.

A highlight is the delicately handled exploration of 'Shenandoah' with Scott Robinson's wonderfully articulate baritone sax imbuing the familiar melody with genuine emotion, before Hersog's sympathtically conceived arrangement widens the scope. Star soloists Noah Preminger and Kurt Rosenwinkel get plenty of space to elevate proceedings with their own distinctive voices, and the generous song lengths make space for countless other diversions: there's room for bassist Kim Cass to wow us with his chops on 'Rentrer', and for some mighty trumpet soloing on 'Sarracenia Purpurea', and even a manly vocal chorus on 'Red River Valley'. A very impressive achievement that may contain an even stronger appeal for its home audience. **Eddie Myer**

Christine Jensen
Day Moon

Justin Time 068944027729 (CD, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Christine Jensen (as, ss), Steve Amirault (p), Adrian Vedady (b) and Jim Doxas (d). Rec. August 2022

Day Moon contains a series of compositions by the acclaimed Canadian saxophonist Christine Jensen that reflect her state of mind during the pandemic years. There's nothing on the recording that represents the isolation experienced during those days by many people quite like Jensen's lonesome soprano sax on the Shorter-ish ballad 'Lined', which mixes 'Spanish' modal and contemporary free bop with an eerily penetrating ambience that sets the tone for the rest of the album.

It's the opener to the excellent 'Quiescence Suite' which she was recently commissioned to write by New York's Jazz Coalition. This is followed by the hard bop-ish 'Twenty Twenty Blues' in which her sax slips and slides sleazily between western tones and 'Tolos d'Abril', with its breezy Brazilian vamp masking a noir-ish interior. Jensen's reedy soprano sound, which is easier on the ears than most, on the more upbeat 'Etude de Mars' concludes a suite of well-crafted, memorable themes from a discerningly mature composer who's delivered the goods pretty consistently since the 1990s. It also picks up on contrasting aspects of Jensen's *oeuvre*. Paring down to a duo with pianist Steve Amirault (a long-time colleague since the 1990s), on alto sax she gives an elegiac reading of the standard 'Here's That Rainy Day' while 'Like in Love' finds a more cool-school route. Committed and heartfelt performances all round, especially from Jensen who sounds reinvigorated as both improviser and composer following tough times.

Selwyn Harris

Photo: Randy Cole

Kjetil Husebø
Years of Ambiguity

NXN Recordings NXN4007 (CD, DL)

★★★

Kjetil Husebø (elec), Eivind Aarset (g, elec) and Arve Henriksen (t, elec). Rec. date not stated

This enigmatically-titled album opens with 'Inhale', an all-Norwegian collaboration between composer/producer Kjetil Husebø, guitarist Eivind Aarset and trumpeter Arve Henriksen. It is a rising and falling web of electronic sounds with moments of sudden-ness from Aarset and an underlying drone from which Henriksen's trumpet emerges in a laconic flourish.

Henriksen reappears on 'Exhale', the final track, where his fluting tone refrain transposes and evolves with cues from Husebø's synth. A grumbling undertow and whistling electronic layers come and go, finally resolved by what might be processed voices. In between those two are five tracks of ambient drone electronica, each atmospheric in its own way, albeit lacking in much dynamic variety. It is tempting to think in terms of video game soundtracks – 'Modernität' evokes machinery approaching through a long tunnel, 'Strong' suggests a sky full of low flying aircraft over a bleak mountain range, something portentuous is creeping closer throughout 'Down'... For this project, Husebø has eschewed his grand piano and the jazzier exchanges of 2022's *Sequential Stream* duo with Henriksen for the more monochromatic disciplines of textured electronica. Its carefully assembled, abstract sonic architecture is very much Radio 3 late-night stuff but the more kinetic life of the three collaborative tracks (Aarset also appears on the more chaotic 'Reconciliation') suggests a Punkt-style remix might be an interesting development.

Tony Benjamin

Omer Klein
Life & Fire

Warner Music 505419742508 (CD, DL)

★★★★

Omer Klein (p), Haggai Cohen-Milo (b) and Amir Bresler (d). Rec November 2022

Based in Germany, Omer Klein has been described as "borderless" by *The New York Times*, which presumably means his style cannot be pinned down to a specific geographic location.

It's something of a backhanded compliment, the tacit implication being his playing lacks a defining personality, a sort of multipurpose style – which is certainly not the case. Klein has matured in plain sight over some 10 albums, which include this, his fourth album for Warner Music. It's an aural photograph of his playing on a certain date last year that reveals an unhurried, relaxed approach to melodic development that is absent in so many younger musicians today, who instead work a couple of patterns through a chord sequence in lieu of something to say.

What Klein has developed is an ability to inhabit the mood of a piece, such as 'Cantando,' a bossa nova (albeit not explicitly stated by Bresler) where he becomes Antonio Carlos Jobim on piano. It is perhaps this universality that prompted the term "borderless," or a musical centre that is hard to define.

But that musical centre is emerging, and he's now moving towards becoming a much more complete artist.

Stuart Nicholson

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Joachim Kühn New Trio
Jazz at Berlin Philharmonic XIV: Komeda

ACT ACT 9972-2 (CD, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Joachim Kühn (p), Chris Jennings (b), Eric Schaefer (d), Plus Atom String Quartet: Dawid Lubowicz, Mateusz Smoczyński (vn), Michał Zaborski (vla) and Krzysztof Lenczowski (clo). Rec. October 2022

There have been numerous recorded homages to the iconic jazz pianist-composer Krzysztof Komeda by artists from his native Poland: from trumpeter Tomasz Stańko's memorable *Litania*, Michal Urbaniak and Leszek Możdżer through to more recent projects by younger-gen Poles such as saxophonist Maciej Obara and Woijtek Mazolewski.

The esteemed veteran pianist Joachim Kühn is German, but he was close to Komeda in spirit as well as in person, and his New Trio, formed in 2015, release their third CD on ACT, a 'live' tribute to Komeda recorded last year at the Berlin Philharmonic XIV. The trio partner with the Atom String Quartet, who've arranged and performed their own unique tributes to Komeda over the past decade. The Third Stream-ish nature of much of Komeda's work makes the choice of string quartet as an extension of the jazz trio, a fitting if challenging instrumentation.

A brilliantly atmospheric colourist and melodist, Komeda's work is a blessing for Atom String Quartet that as individuals are equally adept at pursuing a high level of jazz improv as they are effervescent arrangements as a group, inviting comparisons to Stateside's Turtle Island Quartet. The purposeful sense of structure in Komeda's work fits well with Kuhn's approach and on readings of tracks from *Astigmatic*, the widely acknowledged 1965 studio masterpiece (Kuhn was present at the recording), which is reinterpreted in its entirety here, 'Svantetic' is a highlight. 'Crazy Girl' from the Polanski-directed *Knife in the Water* soundtrack – balanced between exquisite chamber arrangements and a spontaneous string swing - could also be a celebration of the recently departed Swedish saxophonist Bernt Rosengren, who was a pivotal presence on the soundtrack recording. Kuhn is both calm and majestic on the lullaby 'Sleep, Safe and Warm' from Polanski-Komeda's Hollywood hit *Rosemary's Baby*. This certainly numbers among the more stirring tributes to Komeda.

Selwyn Harris

Album Interview

Mark Lewandowski
A Bouquet For Lady Day

Ubuntu UBU0146 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Mark Lewandowski (b), Liam Noble (p) and Heidi Vogel (v). Rec. date not stated

Tributes to Billie Holliday are not in short supply: the woman christened Eleanora Fagan has become subsumed into an iconic figure in the popular imagination that sometimes reduces this complex and multi-talented artist to a handful of tragic clichés.

This project takes a different approach - there's no 'Lover Man', no 'God Bless The Child' and, for all but two tracks, no vocals. Instead, we have a series of duets where Lewandowski and pianist Liam Noble deploy their considerable depth as musicians to create a set of pieces that aren't pastiches or self-conscious exercises in nostalgia, but rather explorations of Billie's unique musical legacy, especially her relationships with other musicians – pianists Teddy Wilson and Mal Waldron, of course, but also the misunderstood Herbie Nichols and the titan Lester Young. 'Billie's Blues' collapses from straight boogie-woogie into dark-hued free playing: 'Who Wants Love' is arranged into some lovely Lester-ish phrasing: 'Some Other Spring' starts with a glittering shower of arco bass and piano tremolos: 'This Year's Kisses' has Lewandowski bringing out the bow again for a dramatic quasi-classical introduction that breaks into hot swing; 'What A Little Moonlight Can Do' explores an impressionistic rubato. Noble is on fine form throughout, his depth, subtlety and range always deployed in the service of the music: Lewandowski impresses with his chops and musicality. The stage is set so that the dramatic entry of Heidi Vogel, singing two of Billie's own compositions with utter conviction, has a real impact, creating a fine climax to this understated gem. Masterly. **Eddie Myer**

Jazzwise's Eddie Myer spoke to Mark Lewandowski

Why does the music of Billie Holiday have such an enduring relevance, within and beyond the regular jazz constituency?

Listening to Billie Holiday's music is like looking in a mirror. She exemplifies what it means 'to feel', and her message defies genre and classification. I think it's because of this that she remains such a treasured cultural icon, irrespective of style. She is the epitome of the blues. She's resilient in spite of coming up against tremendous hardships.

Heidi Vogel makes a wonderful contribution to two tracks. But how do you approach capturing the essence of Billie's music when the line-up doesn't feature a singer?

I purposefully used vocals on tracks written by Billie. I find 'tribute-bands' and pastiche to be dangerous and counterintuitive to what it means to be an improvising musician; I feel that through omitting the voice on the majority of the tracks we're able to stay clear of this danger zone, and comment on her influence on us in a more personal way.

What overlooked aspect of Billie's music do you think deserves more recognition?

Her skillful and poetic penning of lyrics and music. People also too often concentrate on the tragedy in her all-too short life. They miss the beauty in her music, and her incredible courage and strength. We celebrate this on the recording and champion those glorious musical friendships that she had - Lester Young, Mal Waldron, Herbie Nichols and Teddy Wilson in particular.

What are the challenges and rewards of playing in duo with a pianist?

I find it even more intimate than playing solo. The space is both enticing and terrifying as you're having a close dialogue with nowhere to run. With Liam, I feel that we can take the music anywhere we want and we're not bound by some of the limitations (or safety) or having the conversation on a larger scale. I'm inspired by Liam's seemingly endless creativity and hugely informed yet personal voice.

You've 'come home' for this recording. What strengths (or weaknesses!) do you find in the UK scene compared to the US?

I hate to compare the two. Although I guess in the UK, people could feel that they are slightly less tied to the obligation of the blues aesthetic within the music. That's such a part of the American history of the music and it's unsettling if it's missing over here (in the US) at least. Maybe this allows the music to take in some other experience and influence from our (UK) own collective identity. 'The British' are a people made up of storytellers, and I find the musicians in the UK to be among the very greatest.

Harald Lassen
Balans

Jazzland 3779515 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Harald Lassen (saxophones, p, f, syn), Bram de Looze (p), Solveig Wang (syn, cl), Sander Eriksen Nordahl (g), Stian Andersen (b) and Tore Flatjord (d). Rec. June 2022

Lassen has been around on the Norwegian scene for a while now, but this well-constructed album of contemplative moods is surely his best work to date. It's very well recorded in collaboration with technician/recording engineer Marcus Forsgren, who is in total alignment with what Lassen set out to achieve, with (among other things) the perfect EQ balance that captures the predominantly mid-range tonal climate this album inhabits.

Subtlety and understatement are the guiding stars here, where electronic and acoustic sounds contrast, unite and dance around each other within compositions that seem to evolve from small beginnings. Each musical episode consolidates, or contrasts, but above all builds, on what has gone before in a series of sepia cameos that both stand on their own as compositions in their own right, yet come together in a unified album statement that works towards an understated album climax of sorts in 'Impromptu Wonder.'

Stuart Nicholson

Madeleine & Salomon

Joëlle Léandre, Craig Taborn, Mat Maneri
hEARoes

Rogueart ROG-0127 (CD, DL) ★★★

Joëlle Léandre (b), Craig Taborn (p) and Mat Maneri (vla). Rec. 2022

The Sons D'Hiver festival in Paris has been an important platform for improvising artists all over the world for many years, and this concert recording of a stellar international group is something of a calling card for the event.

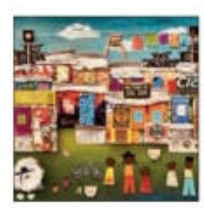
French double bassist Léandre and two Americans, pianist Taborn and viola player Maneri, are all bandleader-composers with long, rich individual discographies stretching back to the 1980s and 90s. They form a unit that has the conversational intimacy of a trio, as well as the rousing energy of a larger ensemble. This is due to the faultless control and wide range of texture and volume. At times Taborn plays so delicately, his keyboard is like a gentle stream amid the heavier rivers produced by his partners. Léandre has a big, brash tone, and when she uses the bow she often creates dramatic low end exclamations that gel powerfully with Maneri's equally hard attack on viola, which evokes a grainy country blues as well as silken chamber feel.

Spontaneously composed, the pieces are potently concise, with deep historical roots that are not used with any complacency. 'E' is a fine example of subversive swing, as the teasingly playful seesaw rhythm is somehow as fragmented as it is fluent. Another strong release on the Rogueart label, whose fine catalogue keeps growing in stature. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Yosef Gutman Levitt with Lionel Loueke
Soul Song

Soul Song Records/Bandcamp (CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★

Yosef Gutman Levitt (b), Lionel Loueke (g), Omri Mor (p) and Ofri Nehemya (d). Rec. date not stated



Hard on the heels of Levitt's lustrous collaboration with guitarist Tal Yalahom, *Tsuf Harim*, comes this rather different coalition. Where that Soul Song label release explored the very Jewish muse of *nigunim*, this coupling with Loueke is necessarily more cosmopolitan. Levitt is of course deeply committed to his exploration of Jewish musics, and here he is backed by Israeli compatriots, so there is a naturally Hebrew feel to much of the music, as initially stated in the opening 'Chai Elul'.

But Benin born, Paris and US musically educated Loueke was always going to toy and tangle with such themes and in he bounces with his own West African schtik to bring a vibrant dance to the song, pushing pianist Mor to pick up the rhythm with a strong right hand.

By contrast, the title track waltz has all the romantic sweep of a Pat Metheny song, with Loueke subtly balanced by Levitt's understated bass. The bass grows richer on the darker brew of 'Myriad' with Mor's keys to the fore again, as they are on the gentle pulse of 'Song of the Sea', replete with shifting brush work from Nehemya.

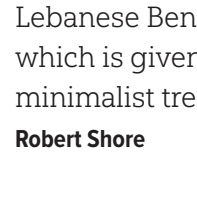
There's no grand ambition here of cultural fusion: simply two citizens of music playing with joy, respect and the widest of smiles. Savour sweetly.

Andy Robson

Madeleine & Salomon
Eastern Spring

Tzig'art TZIG220930 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Clotilde Rullaud (v, f), Alexandre Saada (p, v) and Jean-Paul Gonnod (elec, fx). Rec. 21-22 February 2022



Madeleine & Salomon – aka vocalist and flutist Clotilde Rullaud (middle name: Madeleine) and pianist Alexandre Saada (middle name: Salomon) – released their first album, *A Woman's Journey*, in 2016. That was an exploration of the 'rebellious repertoire' of female American singers, from Josephine Baker to Janis Joplin.

The duo's second album, *Eastern Spring* – with its titular nod to the Arab Spring – revisits the militant pop of the Mediterranean basin of the 1960s and 70s. The arrangements are stripped back and sparse, the better to lay bare the themes of 'Life-Death-Love' – that 'mystical trinity' – largely explored here in French and English. There's 'Lili Twil' by Les Frères Megri from Morocco; 'De l'Orient à Orion' by KR Nagati from Tunisia; 'Ma Fatsh Leah' by Al Massrieen from Egypt; 'Layil' by Shalom Hanoch from Israel; and the Iranian 'pop hymn' 'Komakam Kon', which is combined with US Beat poet Allen Ginsberg's epic 1956 work *Howl*.

There are some wonderful songs to discover and rediscover here, not least the set closer, 'Do You Love Me?', by the Lebanese Bendaly Family, which is given a yearningly minimalist treatment by the duo.

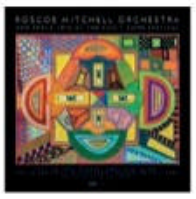
Robert Shore

Roscoe Mitchell

Roscoe Mitchell Orchestra and Space Trio
At The Fault Zone Festival

Wide Hive WH-0371 (CD) ★★★

Roscoe Mitchell (bass s, s), Thomas Buckner (v), Scott Robinson (ts, slide s) and orchestra inc Sarah Cahill (p), Steed Cowart (cond) plus woodwinds, brass and strings. Rec. 2022



Over half a century, Roscoe Mitchell's body of work has gained a stylistic breadth that marks him out as a major contemporary composer as well as improviser. This live set from last year's Fault Zone festival in California provides a fitting summary of the Art Ensemble Of Chicago co-leader's daringly personal approach to form and content in two very different ensembles, making the point that a stage with just a few players can be as compelling as one with many.

Mitchell's ear for an uncommon palette is vividly realised in the Space Trio, alongside baritone vocalist Thomas Buckner and saxophonist Scott Robinson. By contrast comes the 30-piece orchestra in which the richness of the woodwinds, from oboes and clarinets to bass clarinets, bassoon and contrabassoon, enables him to frequently create deliciously deep dark tremors that often suggest that the music is almost coming right up from the bowels of the earth. Mitchell's love of low register instruments – his baritone and bass sax playing has always been a key feature of AEC's discography – is nothing new, but he uses them with stealth here. Indeed, the scoring is very astute on 'Distant Radio Transmission Fault Zone', an epic 28-minute piece that has a shadowy mystery and precisely the sense of a spectral sound sliding in and out of earshot that is suggested by the title. This is a consistently challenging, often austere offering, but it has a soaring operatic character and fluidity of structure that ultimately makes for a rewarding listen.

Kevin Le Gendre

Master Oogway
A Lot of Music About Everything

Nice Things Records NTR 009 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Håvard Nordberg Funderud (g), Lauritz Heitmann Skeidsvoll (ts, ss), Karl Erik Horndalsveen (b, el b) and Martin Heggli Mellem (d). Rec. date not stated

Master Oogway's last – and live – album, *Happy Village*, shared billing with guest flautist Henriette Eilertsen, together creating a rough sense of community during an exploratory Oslo residency. This studio follow-up is, if anything, more anarchically free, as with the vortex swirl of the accurately titled 'Cacophonic Bar Jumping', where sax melodies swim through the mix like distant flotsam. 'Palette Cleanser', though it starts with Håvard Nordberg Funderud's shivering Spanish guitar, similarly centres on Lauritz Heitmann Skeidsvoll's burrowing tenor, which accrues a filthy buzz like a bee's furred skin. 'Think Happy Thoughts' is almost a ballad as Skeidsvoll's tone turns reflective, wailing with a Near Eastern, klezmer edge.

Mostly, though, Master Oogway seem engaged in high-stakes woodshedding, challenging each other on hairpin turns designed to end in crashing collision, as with 'Three Parallel Endings''s squelching pile-up. Tracks are shaped in the moment, clamorous and intense. 'Oogway's Time To Shine' is a jazz-rock odyssey, the studio allowing layered saxes and luminescent sparks of guitar. 'A Lot of Music About Everything' is a worthy title track, as wheezing breaths echo within a cavernous sax which develops a bestial tone and mournful melody, seeming to herald a Viking voyage into alien, inclement wastes. Master Oogway stand apart from the Norwegian scene – headed by the likes of Motorpsycho and Elephant9 – which uses similar instrumentation to improvise grand psychedelic onslaughts. This quartet are closer to free jazz, playing further out, their obscure destinations staying just in sight.

Nick Hasted

Émile Parisien/ Roberto Negro
Les Métanuits

ACT 9964-2 (CD, DL) ★★★

Émile Parisien (ss) and Roberto Negro (p). Rec. 2023

Émile Parisien, now 40 years of age, has assembled an impressive discography on ACT that can be calibrated on a scale from 'Good', 'Very Good', 'Excellent' to 'Brilliant'. If 2017's *Sfumato Live in Marciac* was 'Brilliant', 2022's *Louise* 'Excellent', then *Les Métanuits* would be the click on the dial half way between 'Good' and 'Very Good'. Described enigmatically on the album cover as 'Inspired by György Ligeti's *String Quartet No 1*," which in turn was inspired by Béla Bartók's *Third* and *Fourth* quartets and described by fellow Hungarian composer György Kurtág as 'Bartok's Seventh String Quartet', it all makes for an interesting avant garde mélange.

Ligeti's *Quartet No. 1, Métamorphoses nocturnes*, is in 17 movements, but Parisien and Negro slim this down to 11 on *Les Métanuits*. What they present are adaptations and interpretations of Ligeti's work – for example, on 'Allegro grazioso,' there is a lot of pitch sliding by the strings that is not replicated by Parisien. From an artistic standpoint the integrity of Parisien and Negro's interpretations are beyond reproach. From the end user's perspective it is an album of virtuous boredom, which on reaching the final track is rather similar to having undergone a spiritual detox. **Stuart Nicholson**

Pierrick Pédron/Gonzalo Rubalcaba
Pédron Rubalcaba

Gazebo GAZ 217 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Pierrick Pédron (as) and Gonzalo Rubalcaba (p). Rec. June 2022

The French alto saxophonist Pierrick Pédron and Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba paired up for the very first time on this new release recorded 'live' on studio 2-track, not even rehearsing beforehand.

The instant rapport is though clearly evident on a high-spirited yet sparsely textured, intimate dialogue. French pianist-composer Laurent Courthaliac's arrangements from the American songbook from early to modern jazz standards also draw out the adventurous qualities in this pairing of instrumentalists, highly

regarded in their respective countries as well as internationally.

Pédron has tackled anything from the tunes of Monk through to goth-pop band The Cure and post-Steve Coleman NY funk-bop and straight ahead, while Rubalcaba needs no introductions, being a prolific Blue Note Label artist who's played with Charlie Haden, Chick Corea and Chucho Valdes among others.

There's no mistaking Pédron's debt to Lenny Tristano and Lee Konitz here, and on George Russell's 'Ezz-Thetic' this becomes more pronounced. Rubalcaba's spare, exquisite percussive phrasing is the main appeal though on standard 'The Song is You' and a gorgeously plaintive rendition of Carla Bley's 'Lawns' on which Pédron's seductive alto tone is mesmerising. They are more playful on Sidney Bechet's 'Si to Vois Ma Mere' and highlight the pair's interest in patient exploration as well as note-fuelled excitement. On Henry Mancini's 'Dreamsville' and 'Five will get you Ten' by Jackie McLean, another of Pédron's central influences besides Konitz, they show a lot of character and good tight-knit communication. Rubalcaba's dance-like comping and unpredictable melodic leaps and turns add plenty of extra spice to this highly engaging recording.

Selwyn Harris

Phi-Psonics
Octava

Gondwana Records GONDLP60 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Sylvain Carton (ts, f), Mitchell Yoshida (el p), Seth Ford-Young (b) and Josh Collazo (d). Rec. date not stated

A cursory listen to *Octava* would probably be unduly beguiled by the album's overall smooth and even sound. Phi-Psonics follow up to 2022's debut *The Cradle* maintains the restraint of performance and production that Gondwana's Matthew Halsall has described as "beautiful, humble and honest music."

There are, however, depths to the playing that reward more careful listening, thanks to the empathy developed through the quartet's decade long collaboration. While there's a uniformity to bandleader and composer Seth Ford-Young's loping bass and Josh Collazo's minimal precision on drums throughout, they provide a sure-footed foundation to the dialogue between Mitchell Yoshida's electric piano and Sylvain Carton's flute and tenor sax. Their interplay ranges from the simple elaborations of the folky 'We Walk in The Garden of Our Ancestors' or the languid waltz 'Lunar Reflections' to the almost free improvisation of 'Where We've Been'.

There are clear references to the spiritual jazz of the later Coltrane – that latter track lifts the bassline of *A Love Supreme* – possibly most evident on 'An Offering'. It's a 5/4-time number that takes its time, the slowly evolving tenor sax line eventually yielding to Yoshida's captivating electric piano, building forward into a complex and energetic deconstruction then relaxing back into the ruminative theme. In the context of Octava's general deportment it could be almost disruptive but the four players' well-judged balance remains unruffled. **Tony Benjamin**

Zoe Rahman
Colour Of Sound

Manushi MANUCD007 (CD, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Zoe Rahman (p), Idris Rahman (ts, cl), Rowland Sutherland (f, af), Byron Wallen, Alex Ridout (t), Rosie Turton (tb), Alex Dankworth (b) and Gene Calderazzo (d). Rec. 2022

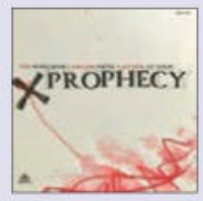
Some two decades after her auspicious debut *The Cynic*, British pianist Zoe Rahman emphatically fulfils the considerable potential that was all too clear at that first stage of her development.

True to form, the writing on this new offering is on a high level. Rahman has struck that all-too-elusive balance between melodic accessibility and harmonic and rhythmic sleights of hand that give the songs an 'edge', away from changes that are too predictable.

Most interestingly, she has scaled her band up from a trio – the synergy between drummer Gene Calderazzo and bassist Alec Dankworth is as strong as ever - to various configurations that go all the way up to an octet. The bigger palette enables Rahman to blend any number of traditions into her original works, and the charmingly jaunty 'Sweet Jasmine', with its echoes of South African icon Abdullah Ibrahim, is a standout.

Then again, the way she uses the deliciously low purr of Rowland Sutherland's alto flute as well as the piercing hark of her brother Idris's clarinet is also engaging. Rahman's own improvising is well measured, with a variety of phrasing and degrees of attack that enhance her lyricism.

The result is music that is satisfying for its emotional charge and range of colour. **Kevin Le Gendre**



Ivo Perelman/ Aruán Ortiz/ Lester St. Louis
Prophecy

Mahakala MAHA-064 (CD) ★★★

Ivo Perelman (ts), Aruán Ortiz (p) and Lester St. Louis (clo). Rec. date not stated

Ivo Perelman & James Emery
The Whisperers

Mahakala MAHA-065 (CD) ★★★

Ivo Perelman (ts) and James Emery (g). Rec. date not stated

Brazilian tenor man Perelman is probably best known for his enduring partnership with pianist Matthew Shipp, which has found voice on dozens of albums, both as a duo and alongside other heavyweights such as William Parker. But he's also a serial collaborator, keen to immerse himself in other contexts. Moreover, while there's something about Shipp's cerebral urgency that brings out Perelman's most dramatic statements, it's in these less familiar settings that we hear a different side of Perelman: less concerned with extremes; more playful, even. He brings that energy to these two new releases.

Cuban pianist Aruán Ortiz is a deep-thinking stylist who applies a poised intensity to every date, so it's interesting to hear him and Perelman teamed with young US cellist Lester St Louis, a key figure in the late Jaimie Branch's Fly Or Die band, which mixed the avant-garde with the accessible to glorious effect. As a trio, they're conspicuously unbeholden to convention.

Across two 20-minute improvisations, they conjure a deceptively dolorous mood that belies the evident fun they're having in sustaining a tantalising tension. St Louis deals solemn drones, plodding strokes and rough scrapes, Ortiz offers

sparse clusters and low rumbles while Perelman, for the most part, resists overblown pyrotechnics. A sense of restraint presides.

A more puckish quickening of energies can be found on the duo with guitarist James Emery. Co-founder of the Sting Trio of New York with violinist Billy Bang and bassist John Lindberg, Emery has also worked with avant-iconoclasts such as Anthony Braxton, Wadada Leo Smith and Henry Threadgill. On the album's 13 short pieces, he plays with a quietly dampened attack that foregrounds the physical properties of the strings, providing plenty of space for densely packed runs full of taut pings and unexpected twangs, and pushing Perelman to spiral into more typically frenzied territory. When Emery begins a thuggishly percussive thwacking of the neck, you can feel Perelman's eyes rolling into the back of his head as his ultra-altissimo squeals rise high but, again, there's an overall control and sensitivity that makes this one of Perelman's more enjoyable recent releases.

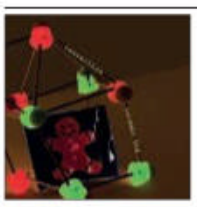
Daniel Spicer

Marc Ribot's Ceramic Dog
Connection

Yellowbird Records YEB7841 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★

Marc Ribot (g, b, v), Shahzad Ismaily (b, elec, v), Ches Smith (d, perc, elec, v) with James Brandon Lewis (s), Oscar Noriega (cl), Anthony Coleman (ky) and Greg Lewis (org). Rec. date not stated



Not as shatter-likely as a ceramic, but pretty shattering to the unsuspecting ear, *Connection* is Ribot's fifth free/punk trio recording: and it's as ecstasy pushing as all the previous releases. Ribot simply can't do half measures, and every track burns down the house. Whether it's the yawing riff of the title track, the distortion heaven of 'Subsidiary' or the chest out anthem of solidarity 'Soldiers in the Army of Love', Ribot and his long-time pals are as in your face as ever: this band does not back down. As confrontational as it gets without actually landing one on your schnozzle.

Beneath the bang and clatter, Ceramic Dog actually compose darn good pop songs (there's one buried deep in 'Ecstasy', Green Day ripped inside out), while Ches Smith speaks the thunder on the chthonic groove of 'No Name'. There is of course so much more to Ribot than the noise machine, but who is to deny his righteous anger at a world gone to the dogs.

Andy Robson

Noga Ritter
Ima

Galileo Music GMC102 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Noga Ritter (v), Tomer Eldor (p, ky), Tony Kofi (ts), Byron Wallen (t), Patrick Kenny (tb), Phil Dawson (g), Nim Sadot, Liran Donin (b), Giuliano Osella (d), Maurizio Ravalico, Dembis Thioung (perc), Seckou Keita (kora), Lis Murphy and Victor Oliveira (bv). Rec. date not stated

An immensely promising debut (as leader) from Noga Ritter, an Israeli-born, London-based singer, composer and bandleader, *Ima* (Hebrew for 'mother') fuses Israeli jazz with the best of the eclectic London scene, throwing in a mixture of elements of Gnawa grooves, Jewish melodies and Senegalese sabar drums for good measure.

Musically, this makes for a dizzyingly diverse listen, but thanks to the individual skills of the musicians Ritter has marshalled, as well as her overarching vision as a leader, it all hangs together rather well. The title track, a celebration of the singer's mother Michal, who died last year, becomes a celebration of the work and potential of mothers, given moving overtones by Seckou Keita's exquisite kora playing; while the brassy 'Ofek' swings like a bastard. Most intriguing is 'Crack The Shell', in which subtle and seductive Middle Eastern rhythms, overlaid with Tomer Eldor's impressionistic piano runs and a spoken word recital by Ritter, and 'Waiting For Change', with its accessible Arabic/Israeli pop textures underlying – rather than undermining – its serious message. Well-travelled and cosmopolitan, Ritter is as comfortable singing and writing in English as she is in Hebrew; able to incorporate textures from all cultures; and on this evidence, a writer of serious potential.

Kevin Whitlock

Kurt Rosenwinkel
Undercover (Live at the Village Vanguard)

Heartcore Records CDHCR19 (CD)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Kurt Rosenwinkel (el g), Aaron Parks (p, el p), Eric Revis (b) and Greg Hutchinson (d). Rec. October 2022

Rosenwinkel's pure tone and unhurriedly graceful phrasing started building an audience in the 1990s, and though some of his storytelling vocal and multi-instrumental work can be an acquired taste, his skills as a jazz-guitar virtuoso with wide tastes have rightly kept him up there with the elite ever since.

With his formation of the core of this fine band in 2012, including young prodigy Aaron Parks on piano and Branford Marsalis bassist Eric Revis (for the *Star of Jupiter* album), Rosenwinkel unveiled a studio band with an urgent live feel. Now *Undercover (Live at the Village Vanguard)* takes that promising story a long way on, with Parks and Revis back, alongside Greg Hutchinson on drums, on a set of the leader's originals captured on the band's run at New York's Village Vanguard last October.

The mid-tempo opener 'Cycle Five', a modulating chord-melody that releases glistening streams of semiquavers from Rosenwinkel, opens the show on a hypnotic ear-worm, 'The Past Intact' is tonally 21st century but melodically and rhythmically boppish, reinforced by a beautifully-paced, faintly Corea-like Parks piano passage.

The pianist's rhapsodic solo intro to the tidal swell of 'Solé' is exquisite, 'Our Secret World' balances Hutchinson's hip-hoppish snap and Rosenwinkel's seamless long lines, and on the waltzing 'Music', Revis' delicate melodic dances with a closely-shadowing Parks are greeted with cheers, and a scything Rosenwinkel solo is driven by intensifying energy from Hutchinson. Great for guitar buffs, but also all devotees of one-touch, sharp-eared small-band jazz.

John Fordham

Felipe Salles and Interconnections Ensemble
Home is Here

Tapestry Records 76032 (CD, DL)

★★★★

Felipe Salles (saxes), Melissa Aldana (ts), Paquito D'Rivera (as, cl), Magos Herrera (v), Nadje Noordhuis (flhn), Chico Pinheiro (g), Sofia Rei (v), Jacques Schwarz-Bart (ts), Yosvany Terry (as) and Interconnections Ensemble. Rec. date not stated

Knoel Scott feat Marshall Allen
Celestial

Night Dreamer ND015 (LP, DL) ★★★★

Knoel Scott (as, f, v), Marshall Allen (as, EWI), Charlie Stacey (p), Chris Henderson (d) and Mikele Montilli (b). Rec. 18 and 19 July 2022

There's a glorious tradition of talented sax players who shunned the limelight to spend almost their entire careers as loyal acolytes to Sun Ra – from tenorist John Gilmore to the Arkestra's current leader, Marshall Allen. Add altoist Knoel Scott to that list. He's been on board the Arkestral space caravan for the best part of 40 years, so it's good to see him now finally releasing his debut as a leader.

After so many years bathing in his cosmic influence, it's unsurprising that the date orbits Ra's world. Allen's on hand providing his unmistakeably raw alto bark and ethereal whooshes on the Electronic Wind Instrument (EWI), alongside erstwhile Arkestra drummer Chris Henderson – and the group is rounded out by two young UK players.

Scott's compositions feel like part of a typically wide-ranging vintage Arkestra session too. 'Les Funambules' is a jaunty, boppish swinger with Scott blowing smooth against Allen's impenetrable roughness. 'Celestial' is a haunting space ballad with Scott on lilting flute and crooning lyrics by former Arkestra vocalist Art Jenkins in a tremulous baritone. And 'Makanda' is a mix of sunshine funk and Latin heat. Throw in a couple of fiery free-form improvisations and it's a gift to all astral travellers. **Daniel Spicer**

Everything runs like clockwork on *Home is Here*, the third album from saxophonist/bandleader Felipe Salles. His big band writing is fastidious, busy, and challenging for anything but the most well-drilled of ensembles, but in the Interconnections Ensemble, he has a perfect vehicle for his voice, which takes us through a vast spectrum of grooves – Afro-Cuban ideas, Brazilian chorino, hard swing, tango – on this pleasingly constructed album.

"There's an anthropological curiosity underneath this whole project," Salles says. His approach to selecting a lineup involved finding a cross-section of soloists mid-Covid, learning more about their stories, and eventually writing a piece reflecting what Salles saw in their playing. What results is a really rich snapshot of each individual: highlights include Melissa Aldana's grace on 'Storytelling', Yosvany Terry on the ever-bustling 'World Citizen', and Nadje Noordhuis' punchy 'Wanderlust'.

The gaze is firmly on Salles' guests, but the real stars of this record are the Interconnections Ensemble themselves. Opener 'Re-Invention' is a microcosm for the whole project, a 10-minute blast through a blaze of rhythms, styles and textures that are well-populated but never hard on the ear. It's a hugely exciting listen.

Hugh Morris

Soft Machine
Other Doors

Dyad DYO32 (CD, DL) ★★★

John Etheridge (g), Theo Travis (ts, ss, f, ky, elec), Fred Thelonious Baker (b), John Marshall (d, perc) with Roy Babbington (b). Rec. 30–31 July and 1, 13–14 August 2022

Things may come, and things may go, but Soft Machine and the Art School dance go on forever. In the five years since the release of the splendid *Hidden Details*, the world has become a different place. But if there was a band supple and subtle enough to both reflect and ride out change, then it's the Softs.

With the appropriately named *Other Doors*, we find the band managing their own succession while reflecting on their own heritage. For John Marshall, at 81, *Other Doors* is his sign-off, but that's not to suggest there's any diminishing of powers. The gong master's inimitable skills at simultaneously engaging percussion toys and his core kit remains to the fore. And for Roy Babbington, there's a gifting of the bass domain to Baker. Both appear fittingly on 'Penny Hitch', a Karl Jenkins tune from 1973's *7*, with Baker luminously taking the lead line on his fretless. New material burns bright too: Travis' 'Crooked Usage' is a weft and weave of intersecting lines that opens into a free, meditative passage, while solo flights for Etheridge ('Whisper Back') counterpoint Travis' more entwined, mazy constructs like 'Fell to Earth'. Different dancers may pick up the steps, but the dance, never fear, goes on.

Andy Robson

Jacob Young/ Mats Eilertsen/ Audun Kleive
Eventually

ECM 2764 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Jacob Young (g), Mats Eilertsen (b) and Audun Kleive (d). Rec. May 2021

Not all jazz recordings have to be at 700mph, or be out to impress, or act as a musical visiting card. So thank goodness for ECM. Here are three jazz craftsmen, at the top of their game, settling into a sustained groove – thoughtful, reflective and a little bit melancholy, rather like the feeling that overtakes you gazing out of the window on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

Young is storyteller and melodist, content to build his line patently and win the listener over by thoughtfully constructed phrases and harmonic allusion. This is not an album for dipping in and out of, it's best played from beginning to end, where each composition leads into, or sets up, the next. It's a beguiling experience, and it's functional too, working as both absorbing foreground music, and sophisticated background music. Opening with 'Eventually,' Young takes you through three of four more compositions, all original – 'I Told You In October,' 'Moon Over Meno' and 'One For Louis' – where did that time go? It did what all good music does, remove you from the day to day and takes you into a space where time disappears. **Stuart Nicholson**

CD Shortcuts: New Releases

3'Ain
Sea Of Stories

Choux De Bruxelles CD/DL ★★★

Gorgeous Syria-by-way-of-Belgium jazz whose mood is primarily eerie and melancholic. Yamen Martini on trumpet and flugel is outstanding on this seven-track collection and the trio's mixture of brass, accordion and double bass makes for some very interesting textures.

Léon Aphar
Aphar's Cave

Circum-Disc CD/DL ★★★

Inspired by the Nick Cave records he listened to as a youth, guitarist Aphar teams up with percussionist/vocalist Ivann Cruz to create a strange, ghostly and country blues-inflected set of stories that sound older than time itself.

Richie Beirach
Leaving

Jazzline CD/DL ★★★

A splendid solo piano recital, recorded in France last year, in which the pianist tackles 13 evergreen jazz standards. He doesn't bring anything dazzlingly original to these old warhorses, but there is a pleasing spontaneity to this recording, and Beirach is obvously enjoying himself.

André Carvalho
Lost In Translation Vol II

Clean Feed CD/DL ★★★

A contemplative, texturally-rich and spacious collection from Carvalho (bass), José Soares (saxes) and André Matos (guitar). The concept – an exploration o f the world of untranslatable words – is conceptually sound, and the execution spot-on. Lovely.

The Composers Collective Big Band
The Toronto Project

Self-release CD/DL ★★★

Led by trombonist/musical director Christian Overton, the 26-piece CCBB create a concept album that aims to answer the question 'what is the sound of a city?' utilising original big band tunes and field recordings; the whole thing recorded in Toronto. It's an enjoyable trip and, on the whole, they succeed in their ambitions.

Hely
Plode

Ronin Rhythm CD/DL ★★★★

This fourth album by the duo of Lucca Fries (piano) and Jonas Ruther (drums) is their best yet, an endless listenable combination of hypnotic polyrhythms and dancing pianistic splashes. It's a trick to make so much of just two instrumental voices, but they pull it off superbly here.

Antonio Liazana & Emilio Solla
El Siempre Mar

Tiger Turn CD/DL ★★★

Jazz-tango pianist Solla and vocalist/saxophonist Lizana's flamenco-styled blowing unite Latin America and Europe in this satisfyingly eclectic cross-cultural fertilisation, backed by a strong rhythm and strings section.

Melissa Pipe Sextet
Of What Remains

Odd Sound CD/DL ★★★★

This is the first album as leader by Canadian composer/bassoonist/baritone sax player Pipe, and it's a mighty fine debut effort. The combination of bassoon, contrabassoon and bass clarinet with trumpet and piano trio is unusual, but most effective texturally. Chamber jazz at its best.

Bruno Råberg
Look Inside

Orbis Music CD/DL ★★★

Solo double bass records can be a slog, but this one works thanks to its extensive musical palette and the bassist's skill. Råberg draws inspiration from the great Evans/LaFaro/Motian trio, as well as his travels in India and the landscapes of his native Sweden. The cover of the Ellington/Strayhorn classic 'Prelude To A Kiss' is a highlight.

Kenny Reichart
Deep Breath

Shifting Paradigm CD/DL ★★

Chicago guitarist Reichart is a fine player and a decent composer, but this collection generally veers towards the overly polite. Only on the appropriately-titled and likeably lively 'Skip' does his quintet escape their self-imposed 'jazz lite' boundaries.

Studer-Frey-Schegel-Weber
Tetrapylon

Leo Records CD/DL ★★★

Here's a line-up to make bassheads giddy: three acoustic basses and one electric! In less skilled hands this could lead to low-frequency overload, but these four players know when to leave space in the music, and to create variation in the sound palette. This really works!

Kasper Tranberg
Nobody's Heart

April Records CD/DL ★★★

The great Danish trumpeter, backed by Nils Davidson (cello, bass) and Frands Rifbjerg (drums), tackles a wide range of standards by everyone from Ornette to Rodgers and Hart, throwing in some contemporary covers along the way. As ever, this long-standing trio's playing is at once exploratory, unexpected, fluid and warm.

Kevin Whitlock

Albums: Reissues/Archive

★★★★★ Landmark Recording ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Disappointing

Brian Auger & Julie Tippetts
Encore

Esoteric/Cherry Red ECLEC2832 (CD)

★★★★

Brian Auger (p, org, syn, v), Julie Tippetts (v), George Doering (g), David McDaniels (b), Dave Crigger (d) with Maxine Waters Willard, Julia Waters Willard and Jesica Smith (bv). Rec. October-November 1977

Reunion albums rarely rekindle the magic of former glories, often becoming little more than marketing opportunities for the (financially) more rewarding tour to follow. One such album to decidedly buck the trend was the reuniting of Brian Auger and Julie Tippetts (*née* Driscoll) for *Encore*, a 1978 release for Warner Bros and the duo's first for almost a decade since 1969's excellent Julie Driscoll-Brian Auger & The Trinity double album *Streetnoise*. They were among the first UK jazz-rock pioneers, and the album brought together Auger's increasingly imaginative Hammond B3 improvisation and Driscoll's striking soul-jazz vocals and socially aware lyrics, before overbearing management problems led to them going their separate ways – she with the experimentation of Centipede and Ovary Lodge and he with the bold, organ-driven jazz-funk of Oblivion Express.

Finally, after 45 years, *Encore* resurfaces. Recorded at synthesiser pioneer Dr Patrick Gleason's Different Fur Studios in San Francisco, it features the supple, Steely Dan-ish accompaniment of former Don Ellis sidemen, Doering, McDaniels and Criggar, and connects back to *Streetnoise*'s intensity and conviction while moving forward with the maturity and vision of their intervening projects.

The pin-sharp repertoire balances the earthy optimism of Al Jarreau's 'Spirit', Auger's 'Git Up' and 'Future Pilot' and the Staples Singers 'Freedom Highway', with the keyboardist in the kind of spellbinding form that earnt him plaudits from Herbie Hancock, against the bittersweet , brooding drama of Steve Winwood's 'No Time To Live', a captivating take on Nina Simone's version of 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' and a heart-stopping, gospel-fire reading of Jarreau's 'Lock All The Gates', with Tippett's passion and power in full flow. It may be over four decades old but in spirit, message and sheer uplifting musicality it's uncannily on-point today. **Jon Newey**

David Axelrod
Heavy Axe

Fantasy/Jazz Dispensary CR0052 (LP, DL) ★★★★

David Axelrod (arr, cond), George Duke (p, el p, syn), Johnny 'Guitar' Watson, Billy Fender, Don Peake (el g), Cannonball Adderley (as), Gene Ammons (ts), Oscar Brashear, Allen Di Rienzo, Snookey Young (t), Dick Hyde, George Bohanon (tb), William Green (as, ts, f, af), Jackie Kelso (as, ts, bs, f, af), Jay Migliori

Dorothy Ashby
With Strings Attached

New Land Records NEWLANDX003 (6 LP) ★★★★★

Dorothy Ashby (hp), Frank Wess (f), Terry Pollard (vb), Tony Studd, Quentin Jackson, Sonny Russo, Jimmy Cleveland (tb), Herman Wright, Eddie Jones, Wendell Marshall, Richard Davis (b), Ed Thigpen, Jimmy Cobb, Grady Tate, John Tooley, Arthur Taylor, Roy Haynes (d) and Willie Bobo (perc). Rec. August 1956, 21 March 1958, 19 September 1958, 8 and 15-16 August 1961, 3–4 May 1965

Although she didn't 'invent' the jazz harp – that distinction probably belongs to Casper Reardon (1907-41) or Adele Girard (1913–1993) – Detroit native Dorothy Ashby has a good claim as the key innovator of the instrument in jazz. Always overshadowed by her near-contemporary, the better-known Alice Coltrane, Ashby had been unfairly forgotten in the music's history until fairly recently; but it was she who established the jazz harp as a serious improvising instrument, elevating it from a mere novelty accompaniment to lead status. Although best-known for the classic Cadet albums *Afro-harping* (1968) and *The Rubaiyat of Dorothy Ashby* (1970), her earlier career has been largely neglected, which is where New Land comes in. For the past couple of years, this UK-based label has been winning over jazz lovers with its beautifully-packaged and curated reissues from the likes of Mingus and Gerry Mulligan, and this spectacular limited-edition box set is their most outstanding release yet.

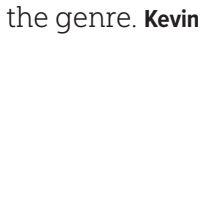
It collects her first six albums – *The Jazz Harpist*, *Hip Harp*, *In A Minor Groove*, *Soft Winds*, *Dorothy Ashby* and *The Fantastic Jazz Harp of Dorothy Ashby* – released on various labels between 1957 and 1965. It is, essentially, both the story of the harp's establishment as an expressive instrument in jazz, and Ashby's development as a player, bandleader and composer. On the first album, *The Jazz Harpist* (1957), her presence is tentative, overshadowed perhaps by the presence of flautist Frank Wess, a stalwart of the Basie band; however, by the following year's *Hip Harp*, she begins to assert herself with some dazzlingly expressive improvised runs, partnering Wess and contributing strong original compositions. On *Minor Groove...*, her harp takes on a luminous elegance, weaving and bobbing beautifully with the ever-loyal Wess, but by now she is in full control. By the time we get to the final album, 1965's landmark *The Fantastic Jazz Harp...* her, and her instrument's, status is secure; it's a deeply spiritual album, with Eastern overtones and Ashby's political consciousness finding its first full expression.

Photo: James J Kriegsmann

Presented in stunning sound (Kevin Gray remastered the albums from the original analogue tapes), beautifully packaged and annotated, *With Strings Attached* is an exemplary example of jazz scholarship. The lavishly-illustrated accompanying booklet, with extensive notes by jazz scholar Shannon J Effinger and enlightening contributions from musicians such as Brandee Younger and Patricia Terry-Ross, is simply superb; we get to learn a great deal about this extraordinary and pioneering musician. At £200, this box is not cheap, but given that a mint original of just *one* of these albums could set you back twice that; the quality of the music and presentation; the compelling narrative; and the importance of these unfairly overlooked albums and the artist who created them, it's great value for money, and you owe it to yourself to dive in. **Kevin Whitlock**

John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy

(ts, bs, f, af), Jack Shulman, Henry Roth, Jerome Reisler, Alexander Neiman (vn), Gary Nuttycombe, William Hymanson (vla), Nat Gershman, Walter Rower (clo), Rudy Copland (syn), Roy McCurdy (d), King Errisson (cga), Billie Barnum, Gwen Owens, Olga James and Stephanie Spruill (v). Rec. March 1974



Best-known these days among the beats 'n' breaks community, producer-keyboardist-composer-arranger David Axelrod also had impeccable jazz connections back in the day, most notably with Lou Rawls and Cannonball Adderley (who strangely, given Ax's credentials in the field, produces this album).

While *Heavy Axe*'s covers of contemporary pop hits 'You're So Vain' and 'Don't You Worry 'Bout A Thing' are entertaining, they're hardly essential; what makes this album perhaps the most fully-realised Axelrod project of the 1970s are his original compositions ('It Ain't For You' and the closing 'Everything Counts' especially), exemplars of the epic, choppy electro-orchestral jazz he helped pioneer; and the presence of Johnny 'Guitar' Watson and George Duke. The former contributes his trademark stinging lines, while the latter is simply on fire – there's some of his best-ever playing here, full of funk and feeling. Add in superb sound and facsimile packaging, and you have one of the very best jazz-rock albums of the period. A must-buy for fans of the genre. **Kevin Whitlock**

Avishai Cohen
Sensitive Hours/Shaot Regishot

Razdaz BLV 843/4 (CD, 2 LP, DL)

★★★★

Avishai Cohen (b, el b, v, ky), Shai Maestro (p), Alberto Pinto (f) Bjorn Samuelson, Oded Meir, Steve Davis, Jonathan Volchuk (tb), Mark Guiliana (d), Lars Nilsson (flhn), Lenny Ben Bassat (d, el p, perc), Adam Sheflan (g), Avshalom Sarid, Tai Isenberg, Pavel Levin (vla), Maya Belsitzman (clo), The Late Titzak Simcha (prayer chant), Amos Hoffman (oud), Hila Zaharur, Dana Adini, Karen Malka, Din Aviv, Ora Cohen (v), Rea Bar Ness (d), Eyal Heller (g), Gil Luis (el g), Itamar Doari (perc, cajon), Ran Salem (af), Ilan Salem (f), Ilan Kachka and Zohar Fresko (perc). Rec. date not stated

Avishai Cohen's singing voice might not have anywhere near the kind of masterful technique we would attribute to his bass playing, but it possesses the similar prayer-like sensuous qualities that grace both his bass and composition.

Those qualities are heard throughout this reissue of songs previously released in 2008, exclusively in Israel where it became a best seller. It's made up of Ladino (Judaeo-Spanish), European Ashkenazi and ancient Hebrew song traditions from his Jewish heritage. At the time, Cohen had just moved from New York where he'd resided since 1992, to his native Israel. In 2009 Cohen followed this recording up by singing in his native language for the first time internationally on the album *Aurora*. At the time he was keeping company with a pair of sidemen who have since become jazz stars in their own right, the influential New York-based drummer Mark Guiliana and pianist Shai Maestro, a compatriot of Cohen's.

On 'Shalom Aleichem' Cohen sings a haunting reverb-y cantorial melody with its spiritual fervour illustrating the *kabalat* Shabbat prayer from which it originates. The track is a perfect example of that element of prayer and calm associated with Cohen's output that has seduced so many to his take on contemporary jazz. *Sensitive Hours* might not be jazz as such, but the spirit and soul of improvisation still runs through Cohen's veins on this album.

Selwyn Harris

John Coltrane/ Eric Dolphy
Evenings at the Village Gate: John Coltrane with Eric Dolphy

Impulse! 5551419 (CD, 2 LP, DL)

★★★★ **RECOMMENDED**

John Coltrane (ts, ss), Eric Dolphy (as, b cl), McCoy Tyner (p), Reggie Workman (b) and Elvin Jones (d). Rec. August 1961

There have been some fascinating, and absorbing, discoveries of previously unissued Coltrane material culled from a variety of sources, but this one takes the biscuit. A private recording taken by the sound engineer at the Village Gate nightclub in Greenwich Village without Coltrane's permission somehow went missing, was found again and then disappeared, only to turn up in the holdings of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, discovered by a Bob Dylan researcher – easily the most circuitous route to release of all the Coltrane discoveries.

The sound quality is not up to Impulse's own recordings of Coltrane with the same group made three months later, originally issued as *Live at the Village Vanguard*. But it's good enough, adding something of a bootleg-ish edge to the discovery. Dolphy's feature on bass clarinet on 'When Lights Are Low' has something of a bassoon-ish quality that is hauntingly eerie.

Coltrane's current release at the time was *My Favorite Things*, on Atlantic, also released as a single, which was doing well, pulling sales for album in. The simple-triple time groove which Jones works through gives the piece a swaying, hypnotic feel that is as good as any version Coltrane recorded, while Coltrane himself, working with a number then fresh to his repertoire has animation that later versions that often surrendered to ritualistic recapitulation.

The formula is repeated on 'Greensleeves,' which the group had recorded three months earlier with an augmented ensemble on *Africa/Brass*. It's Tyner's arrangement, and the Coltrane/Dolphy mutual admiration society push each other to compelling effect.

The album highlight is their version of 'Africa,' again from the *Africa/Brass* sessions. On the new material there is a sense of exploration and discovery, building on the D minor drone/pedal both harmonically (related harmonies) and linearly (in Dolphy's case using unexpected intervallic leaps and fragmented lyricism).

Tyner, who had been playing with Coltrane for about a year when this was recorded, was well into his powerful unifying role between saxophone and drummer, aware (finally) that he had to compete with Jones' volume to be heard, yet retain a coherence and identity of his own. His solos and 'Impressions' and 'Favorite Things' underlinine what an important component of Coltrane's quartet/quintet he was becoming. **Stuart Nicholson**

Fletcher Henderson

The Golden Years: Hits and Classics 1923-1937

Acrobat ADDCD3468 (2CD) ★★★

Personnel includes: Fletcher Henderson, Horace Henderson, Fats Waller (p), Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, Red Allen, Tommy Ladnier, Elmer Chambers, Russell Smith, Joe Smith, Bobby Stark, Emmett Berry (t), Rex Stewart, Howard Scott (c), J.C. Higginbotham, Charlie Green, Jimmy Harrison, Claude Jones, Teddy Nixon, Benny Morton (tb), Cecil Scott, Benny Carter, Russell Procope, Buster Bailey, Don Redman, Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry, Billy Fowler, Jerome Pasquall, Harvey Boone, Hilton Jefferson, Ben Webster (reeds), Charlie Dixon, Clarence Holiday (bj), Freddie White Bernard Addison, Lawrence Lucie (g), Ralph Escudero, June Cole, Del Thomas (tu), John Kirby (tu, b), Israel Crosby (b), Kaiser Marshall, Walter Johnson, Sid Catlett, Pete Suggs (d) and Lois Deppe (v). Rec. 1923–37

The benchmark for reissues of Fletcher Henderson's orchestra from its earliest days until it disbanded in the late 1930s has – since its 1961 appearance – been the Columbia 4-LP set *A Study In Frustration*, produced by John Hammond and Frank Driggs. Repackaged by Essential Jazz Classics in 2011 with an additional 10 tracks to form a 3-CD set, which was then reissued by Pollwinners (reviewed in *Jazzwise* September 2018), it takes the band from its earliest iteration to its 1938 version, after Henderson was already well-established as an arranger for Benny Goodman. So this new 2-CD set from Acrobat has a lot to live up to.

The first CD here broadly follows the Columbia issue, and the second cherry-picks from it, with a small number of different tracks. So for completists, wishing to find Henderson material which is quite scarce on CD, it is a useful addition. But with the caveat that the transfers are not great, and on many tracks, such as 'Henderson Stomp' or 'Whiteman Stomp', the Pollwinners release has the edge in audio terms, even though it's a simple dub of the Columbia LPs.

Neither lives up to the much-missed RCA Bluebird 21-track *Hocus Pocus* compilation, which was remade from original masters. So, if you want a quick whistle stop tour of Henderson from his early Hawkins/Armstrong period right through to the latterday Roy Eldridge/Chu Berry era, this new set will suffice, but for approximately four quid more, the Pollwinners release is better value. Its liner notes are better proofread – the Acrobat having an interesting cornetist listed called 'Rexwart' – and the information about the leader and his band hasn't been lifted verbatim off the internet.

Alyn Shipton

Blossom Dearie

Discover Who I Am: The Fontana Years 1966-1970

Universal/Mercury 4841322 (6 CD, DL)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Blossom Dearie (p, el p, v), Kenny Wheeler (t), Ian Carr (flhn), Derek Grossmith, Harold McNair, Ray Warleigh (f), Keith Bird (as), Reg Leopold (vn), Kenny Salmon (org), David Snell (hp), Jeff Clyne, Freddie Logan, Arthur Watts, Pete McGurk, Daryl Runswick (b), Johnny Butts, Allan Ganley, Ronnie Verrall, Spike Wells (d), Jim Lawless, Slan Hakin (perc), Ladybirds (v), strings, plus Reg Guest, Brian Gascoigne (arr, dir). Rec. 1966-1970.

Blossom Dearie's professional life can be divided into several periods, from her early days in New York, via a stay in Paris to her return to the United States and her association with Norman Granz's Verve record label. This era has been beautifully covered in the recent *Early Years Collection* 4CD set from Acrobat (see *Jazzwise*, November 2022). Following the sale of Verve in 1960, and a brief foray onto Capitol Records, Dearie was lured to Britain by her friend Annie Ross to sing at her London nightclub in 1965. The following year she did her first lengthy residency at Ronnie Scott's and started recording for Fontana – the jumping-off point for this new and totally absorbing anthology. The four albums she made for that label are all here, plus her non-LP, separately-released singles, including 'Moonlight Saving Time', 'Discover Who I Am' and her ode to a Beatle, 'Hey John'.

The Fontana albums are also a barometer of musical change during the last four years of the 1960s, going from the encapsulation of her live act with bass and drums (on *Blossom Time at Ronnie Scott's* and *Sweet Blossom Dearie*) to the more arranged *Soon It's Gonna Rain* and *That's Just The Way I Want To Be*. Both of those later records feature her among a who's who of London's studio players of the time, from classical giants such as Reg Leopold and David Snell, to jazz heavyweights Kenny Wheeler, Ray Warleigh and Harold McNair.

However, the perceptive liner booklet by Jaime Smith suggests that popular as some of these later tracks were, in the same way as on her not-very-successful US Capitol release, Blossom's unique sound as pianist and singer was eclipsed by the large band setting. So the first two of those Fontana albums are the real cornerstones of her later career, with such classics as 'I'm Hip', 'Mad About The Boy', 'Sweet Georgie Fame', and 'Peel Me a Grape'.

What is most marvellous about this new box, however, is the newly-issued final two CDs which are culled from a mass of 7-inch tape boxes found in her family home in the US, brilliantly remastered and including many more trio tracks from her Ronnie's period. Some have false starts, such as the lovely 'Rings and Things', and then there are songs of the age, such as a very original 'My Favourite Things', an intimate 'What The World Needs Now', and a brilliant reimaging of the '59th St Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy)'. For a comprehensive coverage of Blossom Dearie's middle career up to the launch of her own Daffodil label, this beautifully-packaged box is unparalleled. A perfect tribute to the part of her life that owed everything to her popularity in Britain. **Alyn Shipton**

Ahmad Jamal

Four Classic Albums

Avid AMSC1432 (2 CD) ★★★★

RECOMMENDED

Ahmad Jamal (p), Joe Kennedy (vn, arr), Ray Crawford (g), Israel Crosby (b), Walter Perkins and Vernell Fournier (d) Rec. May 1955–Oct 1956 and August 1960

This set of four reissued LPs is predominantly the work of Jamal's earliest Chicago-based group, the Three Strings, with Crawford and Crosby, including their 1960 reunion, on which they were joined by Jamal's then regular drummer Vernell Fournier and violinist Joe Kennedy. There's also a trio set with Crosby and drummer Walter Perkins, who preceded Fournier in the trio. The remastering is excellent and Avid has reproduced the album covers and original liners as a guide to the music. Last year Fresh Sound released the complete Okeh, Parrott and Epic sessions by the Three Strings, and that 2CD release also contains all the tracks in the first two albums here, *Chamber Music of the New Jazz* and *Trio*, plus a number of additional singles.

There's little to choose between those releases technically, but as the best tracks – complete with Jamal's legendary control of dynamics, and Crawford's alternation between tonal guitarist and percussionist – are all here, this Avid release takes a longer view

of the collaboration. Highlights are a highly unusual reading of 'Love for Sale', and the lightly dancing 'Rica Pulpa', while 'Autumn Leaves' sets up the kind of long-running ostinato that typified Jamal's work in the years that followed. Perkins doesn't quite have the instinctive connection with Jamal that Fournier was to develop, but on 'Volga Boatman' and 'Beat Out One' he creates the kind of spacious background that is ideal for Jamal's keyboard work, alternating open space with densely packed ideas. The final LP *Listen to the Ahmad Jamal Quintet* shows a quantum leap in confidence and a style that has coalesced in the pianist's work, and clearly defined roles for guitar and violin that work well alongside the now-established trio. A piece such as 'Valentina' – a brief two-minute vignette – is a perfect demonstration of its sound. All in all, a fine compilation of a great pianist's early years, celebrating what he achieved aside from the famous *At The Pershing*. **Alyn Shipton**

Hank Jones
!!!

Red Records RR123332-2 (CD, LP)
★★★

Hank Jones (p), George Mraz (b) and Kenny Washington (d). Rec. 17 July 1991

This live set is apparently a new discovery, by Italy's revitalised Red label, and no criticism is implied by suggesting it's understandable why it wasn't released nearer the time of its performance. The programme is suitably varied between the occasional original by Jones and an impressive succession of song standards and jazz standards (by Parker, Monk, JJ Johnson, Thad Jones and Joe Henderson – 'Recorda-Me' is a tune that Hank also recorded in Copenhagen in 1983).

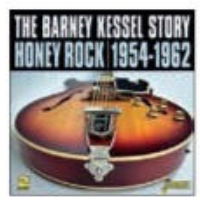
The contribution of the leader, a key moderator of modern jazz piano, is totally typical and, if you're not careful, tends to slip by almost unnoticed because it's always so impeccable.

The surprise, perhaps, is the amount of space given to his colleagues, which underlines Jones' constant encouragement of comparative newcomers, with Washington (born 1958, 40 years younger than Hank) getting several compelling extended solos. Even the late George Mraz (born 1944), who has a few intonation problems early in the set, is given a lot of space and makes good use of it. For fans of creative trio work, this will prove very admirable. **Brian Priestley**

Barney Kessel
The Barney Kessel Story: Honey Rock 1954-1962

Jasmine JASCD894 (2 CD) ★★★★

Barney Kessel (g) with various personnel including Harry Edison, Joe Gordon (t), Bud Shank, Buddy Collette (as, f), Art Pepper (cl, as, ts), Bob Cooper (ts, ob), Bill Perkins, Georgie Auld (ts), Arnold Ross, Claude Williamson, Jimmy Rowles, Victor Feldman (p), Al Hendrickson, Jack Marshall (g), Harry Babasin, Monty Budwig, Red Mitchell, Ray Brown (b), Shelly Manne, Irv Cottler (d), Julie London (v) and others. Rec. 1954-1962



Here's a good-value double-disc compendium of Barney Kessel performances largely culled from the albums issued under his name from 1954–62 on the Contemporary label.

Always an upholder of the Charlie Christian approach – the two men actually met and played together when Barney was 16 – Kessel made his name on the West Coast, his exceptional skills enabling him to function successfully in the twin worlds of studio sessions and small jazz groups. It's the latter on display here, with Kessel caught at play with the very best of his contemporaries who appeared alongside him in both his musical *milieux*.

Jasmine cites the albums from which each of these 40 tracks are taken, but does not provide personnel details. The late Nesuhi Ertegun's note from the earliest of the albums chosen is reprinted here and provides a helpful account of Kessel's early days and his eventual flowering in California. Of course, his career continued to flourish long after the album's time-line: one has only to recall his tours with the Great Guitars and many club and concert visits up until his stroke in the early 1990s.

As if to emphasise Kessel's commitment to the Christian cause, the opening piece is his 'Salute to Charlie Christian', its supple lines and deep-down swing emulating his hero's style with Ross and Manne perfect in support.

Much the same goes for successive tracks, save for Julie London's wistful vocal on 'Cry Me A River' with the guitarist as accompanist and the album title track which was a honking tenor trifle which gave Kessel a freak pop hit. Otherwise, among many others, that immortal trio, the Poll Winners with Brown, and Manne, gets deserved attention, their perfect interplay and unrelenting desire to swing marvellous to observe. Great stuff. **Peter Vacher**

Gene Krupa

Gene Krupa
50th Anniversary Issue: Live And Hot

Upbeat URCD330 (CD) ★★★★★

Gene Krupa (d), Harry James (t), Benny Goodman (cl), Lionel Hampton (vb), Jess Stacy, Teddy Wilson (p), Allen Reuss (g) and Sid Weiss (b). Rec. 25 September 1943, December 1943 plus various dates January–November 1937

Drummer and compiler John Petters is an avowed Krupa enthusiast, and has taken the 50th anniversary of Gene's death as his opportunity to collect an impressive 25 tracks featuring his hero. Given that he's chosen to highlight Krupa's participation in Benny Goodman's small groups of the 1930s rather than the big band itself, it's especially noteworthy that all his selections are from live dates, with just one track, 'Limehouse Blues' recorded by BG's Quartet for a V-Disc [for the US troops overseas] and one other taken from the soundtrack of the 1937 musical romcom *Hollywood Hotel*. Otherwise, these are air-shots, transferred by Petters in notable sound, and never destined for release on record.

With his drummer's awareness, Petters delineates Krupa's work in helpful detail, track by track, as the great man displays his array of effects, fills and press rolls, building swing and excitement, this epitomised by the crowd's wild reaction to his solo on the concert version of 'Three Little Words' by the quintet featuring Stacy, caught at Cornell University in 1943.

It's important to understand that Krupa was a major celebrity following his success with Goodman's orchestra, much like a Premiership footballer today. He had learnt his craft in Chicago, taking in the innovations of Chick Webb and Baby Dodds, his quick reactions and drive helping to make these live tracks by the trio, quartet, and quintet quite electrifying in their impact. Goodman himself always wanted to play and is in brilliant form, exhorting Hampton, Wilson, and Krupa to excel and they do, on a whole host of familiar and not-so familiar songs, often creating a tidal wave of swing. This is exhilarating music, on the edge of abandon much of the time and all the better for it. And yes, Krupa really was a superstar. **Peter Vacher**

Héctor Lavoe
La Voz

Craft Latino CR00644 (LP, DL)

★★★★★

Héctor Lavoe (v, bv), Willie Colón (arr, bv), Mark Dimond (p), Tom Malon, Jose Rodriguez (tb), Ray Maldonado, Hector Zarzuela (t), Eddie 'Guagua' Rivera (b), Milton Cardona (cga), Jose Mangual (bgo), Nicky Marrero (timb), Rubén Blades and Willie Garcia (bv). Rec. 1975

It's Fania Flashback time! Re-mastered by the legendary Kevin Gray for vinyl and also re-released in hi-res digital on Craft Recordings' new Latino imprint; chock-full of some of the greatest, most nuanced tunes ever to set fire to a dance floor, *La Voz* isn't just a specialist classic. It marks the beginning of the recording career of Nuyorican wonder Héctor Lavoe. Or as he was dubbed after his Ruben Bladés-penned 1978 smash hit, 'El Cantante' – 'The Singer'. Simply put, he is, still, the greatest interpreter of salsa music ever. What a work *La Voz* was, and remains: produced by the venerable Willie Colón, whose sprawling big band Lavoe had been fronting for a while, *La Voz* dropped right at the giddy heights of the Johnny Pacheco-co-founded Fania Records label. It's Lavoe wrapped up in a bow – a gift for lovers of class vocalists with superb diction and the preternatural ability to sing fast and hold long notes, and Afro-Latin music alike.

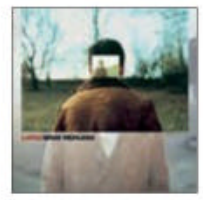
All the loveliest earworms are here: Lavoe's signature hit, a freeform cover of Pacheco's 'Mi Gente' ('My People'), which Marc Anthony covered adequately by comparison in the 2006 biopic *El Cantante*, jostles for primacy next to 'El Todopoderoso' and its delicate but blazing horn intro. Colon's arrangements are masterful throughout – but the whole thing is a trip. **Jane Cornwell**

Brad Mehldau
Largo

Nonesuch 075597904901 (2 LP)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Brad Mehldau (p, perc, syn, vb), Larry Grenadier, Darek Oleszkiewicz, Justin Meldal-Johnsen (b), Matt Chamberlain, Victor Indrizzo, Jorge Rossy (d, perc), Jim Keltner (d, perc, prepared piano, vb), Jon Brion (chamberlin, g, g syn), Emilie A Bernstein, Gary Gray (cl), Jonathan Clark, Earl Dumler (ob), Rose Corrigan (bsn), Jerry Folsom, Joe Meyer, Daniel Kelley (frhn), Kenneth Kugler (btb), William Frank 'Bill' Reichenbach Jr, George Thatcher (tb), Steve Kujala, David Shostac (f) and Thomas Pasatieri (orch). Rec. April 2001



Brad Mehldau's eclecticism is now something of a given – recent releases such as *Jacob's Ladder* and *Finding Gabriel* have pushed the boundaries into avant-jazz territory, math metal and dark electronica – and of course his Mehliana duo with drummer Mark Guiliana has celebrated analogue synths and broken beats in unfettered, free-wheeling style.

Yet 20 years ago, when the keyboardist's *Largo* was first released, it was something of a shock to the system.

With its headline-grabbing take on Radiohead's anthemic 'Paranoid Android' and Jon Brion's highly textural alt.rock production, *Largo* provided tangible technicolour proof of Mehldau's love of a galaxy of sounds, which he expertly juxtaposes against his angular piano work. Recorded in 2001 at Capital Recording Studios, Hollywood, the work of EST and The Bad Plus could well have

Old and New Dreams
Old and New Dreams

ECM Luminessence 1154 (LP, DL) ★★★★

Don Cherry (ct), Dewey Redman (t), Charlie Haden (b) and Ed Blackwell (d). Rec. August 1979

Gary Burton
The New Quartet

ECM Luminessence 1030 (LP, DL) ★★★★

Gary Burton (vb), Mike Goodrick (g), Abraham Laboriel (b), Harry Blazer (d). Rec. 5–6 March 1973

These two releases, both examples of exceptional music-making, represent the second batch of ECM's new Luminescence vinyl reissue programme, casting light on gems from the label's illustrious back catalogue.

Old and New Dreams is from an ensemble (pictured) formed in 1976, and comprised of the foremost exponents of acoustic Ornette Coleman compositions, with Cherry, Haden and Blackwell three-quarters of the band that played on Coleman's *This Is Our Music* from 1960; Redman was a childhood friend of Coleman's from his Fort Worth days.

By the time they made their eponymous debut on the Black Saint label in 1977, they were including non-Coleman compositions from within the band, something they continued on their [also eponymous] debut on ECM in 1979 with titles such Redman's 'Orbit of La-Ba,' Haden's 'Song for the Whales,' Cherry's 'Guinea' and Blackwell's 'Togo,' alongside Coleman's 'Lonely Woman' and 'Open or Close.' The group's significance lay in how they opened up a wider general audience for Coleman's music; it seems doubtful that the band members realised how significant their collaborations were, as they allowed other personal projects to intervene, leading to an intermittent existence, but with this release, and their subsequent *Playing*, also on ECM, that captures them at their best. This is music that's stood the test of time because it is of rare and exceptional quality.

The 'New' that precedes 'Quartet' on Gary Burton's 1973 release was there to put clear blue water between his groundbreaking quartet (1967-9) with guitarist Larry Coryell (and later Jerry Hahn), drummer Roy Haynes, and bassist Steve Swallow, by modifying and streamlining the sound that defined him in his jazz-rock period. His new ensemble came with a fresh repertoire and fresh faces, reflecting Burton's move from New York to Boston, using Boston-based musicians.

The result was enduring, even if the group did not last long together, and it set in train a way of working that he would broadly follow with his subsequent ensembles by drawing mainly on the compositional talents of Carla Bley, Mike Gibbs, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett and, on this album (the exception to the rule), two pieces by pianist Gordon Beck.

Burton possessed complete mastery of his instrument and had a profound understanding of harmony – and that's saying nothing of his remarkable technique, which brought the four-mallet method into the mainstream. In live performance he could be stunning and was a source of huge fascination to a young Pat Metheny, whom Burton mentored. His playing here contains no high-tempo fireworks, but refined, almost perfect lyrical expressionism, use of dynamics, and a technique that effortlessly embraces the four-octave span of his instrument. He had a special affinity for Carla Bley's penchant for unusual harmonic movement, and on her single representation on the album, 'Olhos De Gato,' Mike Goodrick clearly shares his outlook. Chick Corea's joyous 'Open Your Eyes, You Can Fly' shows Burton has not divested himself of jazz-rock influences, but elided them into a more free-flowing interpretation than his 1960s work, as the romping 'Mallet Man' and the harmonically arresting 'Tying Up Loose Ends,' both by Gordon Beck, reveal. Jarrett's profound 'Coral' sees Burton responding with an intense lyricism that makes this a slow burn highlight; while Mike Gibbs' 'Four or Less' reveals Laboriel well on the way to becoming the in-demand bassist he would become while Gibbs' 'Nonsequence' is a highlight in a much-overlooked album that remains a classy offering 50 years after it was recorded. **Stuart Nicholson**

informed Brad's approach here, yet it's Brion's colourisation with layered horns, distorted piano through a wah-wah pedal and analogue emulation of Ringo's thudding drums on a lo-fi take on 'Dear Prudence' that offer knowing nods to the fine line between jazz and other genres.

The fact that by side four of this very welcome 20th anniversary reissue, Mehldau has grabbed some mallets and happily attacks the vibes for a break-beat driven splicing of Jobim's 'Wave' and Lennon and McCartney's 'Mother Nature's Son', should therefore come as no surprise at all.

This version (on vinyl for the first time) features artwork adorned with a sheepskin jacketed Mehldau doing his best 'pensive 1960s rocker' impression, while the large double-page inner sleeve is packed with detailed personnel/track info with a note stating, "All music recorded live on the floor. There were no overdubs".

For all its expansiveness, *Largo* is an earthy, powerfully honest album, and it's a joy to have it in its full gatefold glory. **Mike Flynn**

Sonny Rollins
Go West!: The Contemporary Records Albums

Contemporary/Craft Recordings CR00434 (3CD, 3LP, DL)

★★★★

Sonny Rollins (ts) with (coll pers) Vic Feldman (vb), Hampton Hawes (p), Barney Kessel (g), Ray Brown, Leroy Vinnegar (b) and Shelly Manne (d). Rec. 7 March 1957 and 20-22 October 1958

It's comparatively easy to assemble a compilation of Rollins' work for the LA-based Contemporary label, consisting of two albums and some alternate takes. *Way Out West*, celebrating his first visit there, is justly famous – and not just for the cover photograph.

If you sometimes think it might be a tad overrated – given the amount of equally fantastic stuff that Sonny recorded during 1956-58 – another listen is enough to get you excited all over again. The fact that this was his first album with no piano (soon to be followed by *A Night At The Village Vanguard* and then *Freedom Suite*) threw even more responsibility on the already dominant leader, and the supremely competent backing by Brown and Manne let his imagination roam free. As well as the selling point of playing two "cowboy songs", he also covered two standard ballads and a themeless version of 'After You've Gone' titled 'Come, Gone' (Aidan Levy's biography claims he wanted to call it 'After You've Come').

The 1958 *Sonny Rollins and the Contemporary Leaders*, so-called because all the sidemen had done their own albums for the label, is comparatively lightweight but no less exploratory. In the repertoire of ancient standards ('Rock-a-bye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody', anyone?), the most recent entry is 'How High The Moon' and, though everybody gets to solo, it's mostly Sonny with, on 'You', Feldman not only soloing but exchanging eights with the saxophonist. Alternate takes from both albums have long been available, for instance on OJC reissues, although in fact there's one more take from *Way Out West* omitted here, for reasons unexplained – the alternate of 'There Is No Greater Love' (most recently on Essential Jazz Classics, EJC55074) is broadly similar, but it's not identical to the master take. Those that are here are fascinating, and I would guess usually recorded before the issued takes because, although Rollins' invention is prolific, the official versions are perhaps tighter and even more compelling, thanks to the saxophonist's self-editing.

The Craft package is excellently remastered (of course) and, if you don't know this music already, now's the time to find out. **Brian Priestley**

André Previn and His Pals, Shelly Manne & Red Mitchell
West Side Story

Contemporary/Craft Recordings CR00390 (LP, DL)

★★★

André Previn (p), Shelly Manne (d) and Red Mitchell (b). Rec. 24-25 August 1959

More than 65 years on from its theatre debut, it's now difficult to grasp just how musically radical and adventurous Leonard Bernstein's score for *West Side Story* was, with its high-intensity mambo rhythms and jagged jazz stylings – particularly in the context of 1950s Broadway musicals. It's no surprise then, that jazz musicians have from the start been drawn to the score, interpreting either individual songs or the complete work. André Previn – in the company of Shelly Manne and Red Mitchell – was one of the very first, choosing eight tunes to rearrange for the trio format. This group had enjoyed huge success with their re-imaginings of classic musicals (notably *My Fair Lady*) and this album continues that commercially successful, critically-acclaimed run. It's great fun, of course, beautifully-played (Previn is a marvellous, light-touch pianist) and swings regally; but if there's a (slight) fault, it's that the interpretations are sometimes a little too respectful, lacking the energy and street grit of the 1958 original Broadway cast album. As one might expect, there's superb sound from this all-analogue Bernie Grundman master of Roy DuNann's magnificent original recording; nice 1950s-style packaging too. **Kevin Whitlock**

Sam Rivers
The Quest

Red Records RR123106-2 (CD, LP)

★★★★ **RECOMMENDED**

Sam Rivers (ts, ss, f, p), Dave Holland (b) and Barry Altschul (d). Rec. 1976

Here's a welcome reissue of one of the seminal entries in Sam Rivers' voluminous discography.

Although the multi-reedist made some wonderful orchestral music there was something absolutely compelling about his many small groups, as this 1976 trio formed with bassist Dave Holland and drummer Barry Atlschul, proves in no uncertain terms. A few years prior the two men had been members of Circle, the highly adventurous quartet that also featured Chick Corea and Anthony Braxton, so there is little surprise that there was a strong chemistry that underpinned this particular venture. Rivers, Holland and Altschul fulfilled the ideal of spontaneous composition insofar as the music moves freely in a number of different directions all the while retaining a sense of form because the players are so closely allied in the way they negotiate every twist and turn, responding to one another but also spurring each other on.

The result is music that has a dizzyingly, invigoratingly wide idiomatic range, flowing from a kind of steroidal swing to juddering Latin riffs to off-centre gospel when Rivers turns his attention to the piano.

Then again, the withering explosiveness of his playing also applies to his work on tenor saxophone and flute. Rivers is not as lionised as several others in improvised music, but listening to this recording alongside his startling albums for Blue Note and Impulse! makes it clear that he should be recognised as an innovator who has his rightful place in any modern canon. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Cedar Walton
More Blues For Myself
Red Records RR123333 (CD, LP)

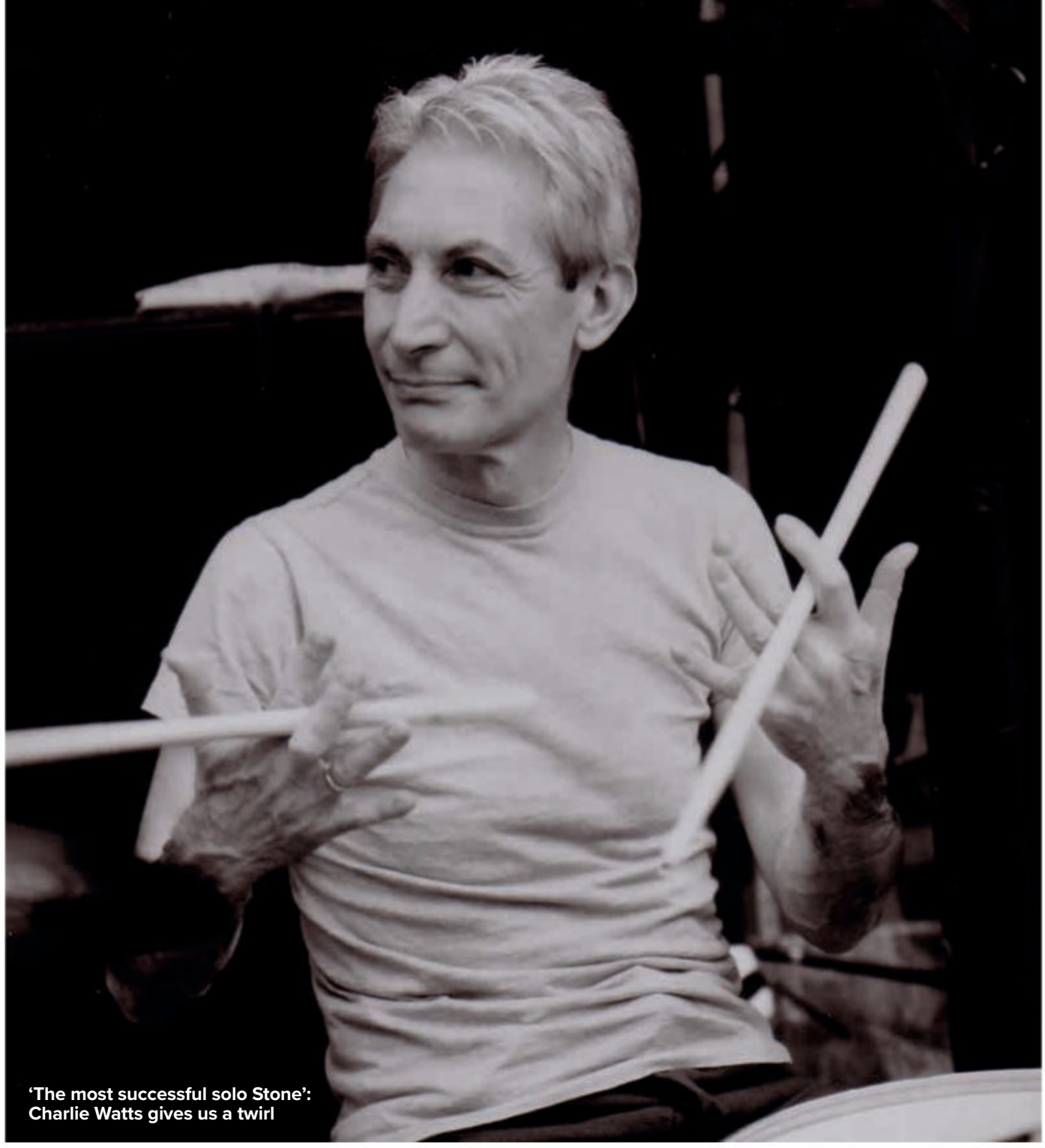
★★★

Cedar Walton (p). Rec. February 1986

The late Cedar Walton started out as an authoritative sideman for people like JJ Johnson and Art Blakey, and developed into an equally impressive bandleader. First of all with quartets (sometimes labelled Eastern Rebellion) featuring the likes of George Coleman, Bob Berg and even Harold Land on a 1994 European tour, he also led a long-standing trio with David Williams and Billy Higgins.

It's Walton's own crisp and crunchy playing that's singled out here and, surprisingly perhaps, given the liner notes cite his album *Blues For Myself* as receiving considerable acclaim, rather than reissue it, the Red label has decided to release the out-takes from that session. Cedar frequently created memorable originals, and the fact that his 'Booker's Bossa' and 'Bridge Work' are each heard in two complete takes doesn't imply any inferior quality. The other item to receive two versions is a flamboyant arrangement of the standard 'Without A Song', whereas the other standard ('Li'l Darlin') and the other Walton original ('Sixth Avenue') only appear once. There's sufficient variety to make a listenable programme, and the fact that these were all re-done for the original issue could hardly be guessed by listening to the present album.

Brian Priestley



'The most successful solo Stone': Charlie Watts gives us a twirl

Charlie Watts
Anthology
BMG CAT816DCD (2CD, 2LP, DL) ★★★

Charlie Watts (d, perc), Jimmy Deuchar, Harry Beckett, Dave DeFries, Steve Sidwell, John Huckeridge, Ted Emmett, Colin Smith, Gerard Presencer, Henry Lowther (t), Annie Whitehead, Paul Rutherford, Chris Pyne, John Picard, Mark Nightingale, (tb), Peter King, Ray Warleigh, Willy Garnett (as), Alan Skidmore, Courtney Pine, Evan Parker, Bobby Wellins, Don Weller, Danny Moss (ts), Gail Thompson, Julian Argüelles (bs), Olaf Vass (cl, f), Stan Tracey, Brian Lemon (p), Bill Lesage, Jim Lawless, Anthony Kerr (vb), Dave Green, Ron Mathewson (b), John Stevens, Bill Eyden, Jim Keltner (d), Luis Jardim (perc), Jack Bruce (clo), Bernard Fowler (v), plus strings and London Metropolitan Orchestra. Rec. 1986-2001

During the 58 years of his day job with the Rolling Stones Charlie Watts released eight albums with his own jazz ensembles and two with the ABCD of Boogie Woogie prior to his death in 2021: a catalogue that *Variety* magazine described as, "the most successful Stones solo projects".

This officially authorised double album cherry-picks from seven of his jazz titles, all of which are firm testament to his life-long love of jazz, particularly 1940s/50s repertoire, and his ceaseless advocacy and high regard of British jazz musicians; none more so than his first venture, *Charlie Watt's Orchestra Live at Fulham Town Hall* from 1986. Easily one of the most exuberant British big band recordings, it features a colossal 30-piece dream-team, from Jimmy Deuchar, to Courtney Pine and Stan Tracey, and kicks off here with the double punch of Edgar Sampson's 'Stompin' At The Savoy' and Benny Goodman and Lionel Hampton's 'Flying Home'. Watts' deft touch and uncomplicated but effective swing, bolstered by John Stevens and Bill Eyden, drives the electrifying arrangements.

Slimming down to a quintet for 1991's warm eulogy to Charlie Parker, *From One Charlie*, featuring Gerard Presencer and Brian Lemon alongside Peter King and Dave Green, Watt's found his sweet spot with this gifted, empathic band heard here on two excellent King pieces and two Parkers. The same quintet's live *A Tribute To Charlie Parker with Strings* offers up four tracks augmented with a string section and Bernard Fowler's narration. Selections from his next two albums, *Warm and Tender* and *Long Ago & Far Away*, are delightful dips into the great American Song Book with enticing new arrangements, Fowler's assured vocals and lush strings by the London Metropolitan Orchestra.

Watts took a left turn in 2000 with *Charlie Watts Jim Keltner Project*, where the two drummers concocted an impressionistic percussion and electronics tribute to their favourite jazz drummers, from which come 'Roy Haynes', 'Elvin Jones', and the highlight 'Airto', but he soon returned to what he did best. This time his quintet was extended to a formidable tentet, adding Henry Lowther, Evan Parker, Julian Argüelles, Mark Nightingale, Anthony Kerr and Luis Jardim for the 2001 live *Watts at Scott's*. As compelling as the 1986 Orchestra but more agile, this was Watts' finest hour and here includes Ellington and King selections alongside 'Tin Tin Deo' and a storming finale of Strayhorn's 'Take The A Train'.

Also included are three previously unreleased 1978 live tracks from Rocket 88, Watts' loose boogie-woogie band. But where are tracks from Watts's 2010 final jazz recording, the excellent *Charlie Watts Meets The Danish Radio Big Band*, featuring sparkling Presencer arrangements of standards and Jagger/Richards classics, including 'Paint It Black'?

A careless omission, which, along with the lack of musician credits, would not have pleased Charlie. **Jon Newey**

Classical & World Music Reviews

The editors of our sister music magazines, *Gramophone* and *Songlines*, recommend some of the best new releases this month

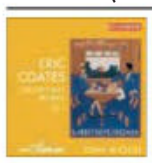
Classical

BROUGHT TO YOU BY GRAMOPHONE

BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / John Wilson

Coates – Orchestral Works, Vol 3

Chandos (CHAN20164)



Welcome to the third volume of the music of Eric Coates from John Wilson and the BBC Philharmonic. The disc is flawless: two suites and a 'phantasy' flanked by shorter pieces, so redolent of the period they evoke from the late Twenties to the early Fifties – when Coates had to hand a march tune, which the producers of the forthcoming film *The Dam Busters* (1955) took a liking to. John Wilson's way with it – letting that tune glide in almost imperceptibly, then the violins decorate it, like sprinkling icing on a cake – typifies his approach.

Individual players relish their opportunities to shine. Helena Wood, the Philharmonic's leader, lingers over that final farewell in Lost Love, and oboist Will Oinn takes the long view of 'Springtime in Angus' from *The Three Elizabeths*. In *The Three Men* – portraits of chaps in country, city and naval guise – the orchestra's saxophonist adds an inimitable period dance-band flavour to a sophisticated Mayfair scene. The finale, 'The Man from the Sea', is a compositional *tour de force*.

The phantasy *Cinderella* wasn't intended for the theatre but any choreographer would find it a gift to stage. Coates' compact rendition of the fairy tale springs to life under Wilson's baton, the conductor's dramatic instincts never more assured than when the gong strikes midnight.

I was enthralled by this account, and indeed by the whole disc. Vol 4 is due next year. Bring it on.

Adrian Edwards

Reginald Mobley/Baptiste Trotignon

Because

Alpha (ALPHA936)

"Because it reflects our wish to give this powerful repertoire [of African American songs] a new interpretation", write the two artists, "to offer it a different sound from the one it is more used to". All very intriguing and worthy.

But the CD gets off to a disconcerting start. No listener will be prepared for the sound of a classically-trained countertenor singing spirituals, and while a distinctive jazz piano arrangement of such material makes an interesting alternative, such a setting must surely be sensitive to the words.

Which is why a hard-driven agitato piano beneath 'Sometimes I feel like a motherless child' simply does not work – especially as an opener.

Better to have begun with the exuberant 'I Got a Robe', where the accompaniment perfectly complements the text. Or the Crucifixion song 'Were You There?' – close your eyes, it might be Marian Anderson. 'Steal Away' is the highlight of the disc, where text, melody, arrangement, voice and piano all combine for a few minutes of heart-stopping beauty.

Before that there is the title track 'Because', by the now-ubiquitous Florence Price. She and Harry Burleigh provide three more saccharine ditties. There is also an ill-advised rendition of the Motown classic 'I Heard It Through The Grapevine', which falls some way short of Marvin Gaye's imperishable original.

There's a good booklet in French, English and German with, unusually, all the song lyrics in English and French.

Jeremy Nicholas

World Music

BROUGHT TO YOU BY SONGLINES

Nakibembe Embaire Group

Nakibembe Embaire Group

Nyege Nyege Tapes

Nakibembe is a small village in Uganda's Busoga Kingdom, where the locals preserve the local tradition of playing and dancing to the undulating rhythms and melodies of the *embaire* – a massive log xylophone, comprising up to 25 wooden keys, which is amplified by the pit dug around it in the village's communal space. As many as eight people play this instrument at any one time, supported by others on drums and shakers, and the combined effect is an overwhelming whirl of collective polyrhythmic energy.

The unexpected twist to this album is that, for three tracks, Nakibembe are joined by Indonesian experimental electronic artists Gabber Modus Operandi and Wahono, who process the sounds of the embaire and drums to create '140', '160', and '133' – titles which refer to tempi. The similarities between *embaire* and *gamelan* music-making mean that the Indonesians are at home atomising and manipulating the tuned percussive sounds to the extent that on '160' they seem to depart almost entirely from the source, having fitted the instruments with midi triggers to extract their raw data. If this seems a bit chilly, don't be put off; what this collaboration reveals are the deep global connections between ancient and modern. **Tom Newell**

Track to Try: '140'

Qwalia

Sound and Reason

Alberts Favourites

Four of London's most dynamic musicians enter the studio in April 2021. Then follows an epic two-day voyage of non-stop, all-improvised sonic exploration, rooted in contemporary funk- and hip-hop-informed jazz, with elements of downtempo and trip-hop, an '80s synth aesthetic, hints of dub, ambient and Afrobeat and nods to Afrofuturism.

They emerge with 13 hours of music on record. Two years later, and all that material has been boiled down and massaged into a lovely 41-minute debut album from Qwalia.

The quartet is Tal Janes on guitar, Ben Reed on bass, Joseph Costi on keys and bandleader Yusuf Ahmed on drums – each member provides a vital role, and their layers of melody and atmosphere reward repeated listening: maybe this time a bassline will jump out at you, or some inspired guitar vamps, or a particularly pleasing synth pad.

The most striking track is 'Vagherah', which is built around a sample of the great *qawwali* singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan speaking at a London concert.

Placed in front of a super draggy beat, it gives an interesting effect of Khan rapping – it's very strange but it works really well.

What a way for Qwalia to make their mark. They're definitely an outfit to keep an ear on.

Jim Hickson

Track to Try: 'Vagherah'

jazzwise

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THE PLAYER

NIGEL AUBREY THOMAS

The in-demand, South Coast bassist tells **David Gallant** about his life in music, the gear he's used over the years and his all-time favourite choices

"I first really encountered jazz on the John Peel radio show," begins Nigel Aubrey Thomas. "He played a track from the Mahavishnu Orchestra's *Inner Mounting Flame*, and I was blown away having never heard anything like it before. Without knowing any names, I started taking out random jazz records from the local record library and somehow discovered John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, which had a profound effect on me, and I almost wore it out! The whole amazing world of jazz opened up to me and I felt I'd found what I wanted to play!"

Creativity has long been at the heart of the Thomas family.

"My sister is an artist, and my great grandfather, Walter Aubrey Thomas, was a noted architect who designed the Liver Buildings and other landmarks in Liverpool. And I believe my grandmother was quite an accomplished pianist in her younger years; however, she would never talk about music or seem at all interested in it. I've also got a distant memory of a cousin who apparently played bagpipes. Naturally I've kept quiet about that (until now)!"

Thomas' initial introduction to music came through listening to his sister's soul records. "I was around the age of five or six when I started playing along to my sister's soul records on some Huntley & Palmers biscuit tins (the luxury assortment naturally!) with my mum's knitting needles as sticks. Coins on the lid sounded remarkably good as a makeshift snare drum.

"I loved listening to music in my teens, but only started playing when I was almost 17, after rather liking the sound of the bass strings on my girlfriend's acoustic guitar."

Thomas managed to persuade his father to buy him a cheap bass guitar and recalls that it was a Zenta: "After a short while of having my bass guitar, I realised I really liked playing and it felt natural, so I got private lessons from a lovely teacher called Fred Cambridge, and he helped me to get a good grounding and develop my technique.

"Unknown to me at the time, it [the bass guitar] was pretty dreadful. The action was very high with a warped neck, and I only realised when I got my first Fender just how bad it was!"

Thomas started playing (and singing) with some old school mates, "and fairly soon I started playing in a band doing rock /blues stuff. We used to play at a legendry music pub called the Alhambra (sadly demolished many years ago) on the seafront in Brighton, which in the summer months would be packed with mostly foreign students, who were a very receptive, ever-changing audience. Fun times indeed!"

I'm curious to know about that first Fender.

"I bought it back in 1973. It was a 1962 cherry red Fender Precision bass, which after playing the Zenta seemed like a Rolls Royce. Then, around 1977, I traded in the Precision for a 1963 Jazz Bass, which I still play to this day."

I ask Thomas whether he owns any other bass guitars: "No. I really don't have a huge desire for another bass guitar, although it would be nice to have a five-string with the low B string."

> ***"I bought my double bass in 1980 – it was made in 1930. It's the only one I've ever owned"***

Thomas also plays the double bass. "I bought my double bass in 1980 – it was made in Berlin around 1930 and is a fairly standard 3 /4 size. It's the only double bass I've owned. I had a lot of major work done on it after it had an accident. This really improved it and was much nearer to the sound I wanted."

We get onto strings. "In the past, I've experimented and tried many different strings on the double bass including gut strings, but at the moment I use a mix of D'Addario Zyex on the bottom and Pirastro Olive/Evah Pirazzi on the top. I find this combination gets somewhere close to the sound I hear in my head, and they work well for both pizzicato and arco. I use medium gauge D'Addario Markus Millar Fat Beams on my Bass guitar. They're nice, good quality strings that last well."

And what about amplifiers? "I started with a tiny cheap bass practice amp, and then graduated to a louder amp head (I think it was a Sound City) and an enormous bass cabinet with an 18-inch speaker which I bought off another bass player who must have seen me coming! It was dreadful and hard to get up the narrow stairs of our first floor flat, let alone persuade my dad to give me a lift! I then moved on to a Traynor amp which was always blowing valves, and then various other usually unreliable amps".

These days, on jazz gigs Thomas uses an Acoustic Image coda amplifier combo for double bass. As he says: "it's light and portable and reproduces the sound of the bass really well. I don't really like playing loud gigs on the upright, but I've an old Trace Elliot Acoustic amp that I sometimes use which gives a bit more volume." When it comes to his electric bass, Thomas employs a Markbass rig: "It sounds good". But he confides that he has "always meant to get an old Ampeg rig, as it works so well with my old Fender Jazz."

Photo: Nigel Aubrey Thomas

Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant reviews the latest musical publications and accessories for professional and serious amateur musicians

Latin Percussion Single Brass Timbales

This new addition to the drum set friendly 'LP your Kit' line brings yet another dimension to the tonal and timbral palette of the drum kit.

These new 6-½" brass Timbales are fitted with chrome hardware and come in two sizes, the 13" (LP6513-B) and 14" (LP6514-B) and like all the other LP products in this series are kit ready and fitted with heavy duty mounting brackets, which allows the Timbales to be fitted to any 3/8" – 1/2" mounting arm. The new singles offer the same features as the LP Prestige Timbales, including compact sizing and a high-quality top tuning system for rapid adjustments. The drums are crafted with a hefty rim and wide rib placement build to enhance rim shots and offer a warm, bright tone with a dry cascara (stick on shell). We suggest you take a look. It's a no-brainer for those players who regularly cross over from Latin to jazz, to fusion and beyond.

www.lpmusic.com

Champion Fully Synthetic Valve and Rotor Oils

Expanding on their range of instrument care products, British brass and woodwind accessory brand Champion recently launched a new range of premium, fully synthetic valve and rotor oils.

Led by brass specialists, the new range has been developed and made in the UK. The Champion Premium Fully Synthetic 'Light' Valve & Rotor Oil is designed specifically to lubricate the valves of trumpets, cornets and other brass instruments and is also perfect for use on rotary valves. The Premium 'Regular' oil is for use on larger brass instruments such as euphonium or tuba, or older vintage valved instruments.

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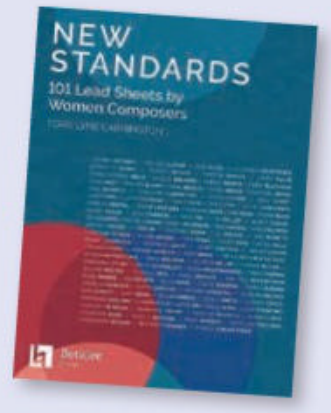
The convenient 50ml bottle features a thin applicator nozzle and child-safe cap which is safety-compliant with all UK, EU and International Safety Standards. The oils are also odourless.

www.bandm.co.uk

New Standards – 101 Lead Sheets by Women Composers



Grammy Award-winning drummer, and this book's editor, Terri Lyne Carrington, is the founder and artistic director of the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice; she says she put this collection together as a result of not finding enough compositions by female musicians in the famous *Real Book* publications.

As any jazz student will know, *The Real Book*, or 'fake book' is omnipresent at jam sessions and while some of the simpler tunes contained within have become 'standards' thanks to their memorable melodies and simpler chord sequences, the books also contain an ever-expanding list of tunes that cover everything from latin to fusion, Brazilian to the knottiest of Coltrane workouts (such as '26-2').

With *New Standards*, Carrington has aimed to create a supplementary, alternative resource to this 'jazz standard' canon which has served students, teachers and professionals throughout the development of jazz music. Thus, we find compositions here that span nearly a century, from Lil Hardin Armstrong's work of 1922 to songs written in 2021 by recent Berklee Institute graduates.

The book itself is beautifully produced, does credit to the composers and, more importantly, gives them exposure, as there's no doubt that all musicians, irrespective of gender, will buy the book and explore these varied compositions.

It is quite an eclectic set, with pieces across 13 different sub-genres of jazz: from blues to post-bop, groove to vocals from a huge range of leading female musicians such as Mary Lou Williams, Alice Coltrane, Esperanza Spalding, Geri Allen, Maria Schneider, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, Dorothy Ashby, Nubya Garcia, Nicole Mitchell and many others. Not exactly 'standards' perhaps, but a welcome new source of musical information and inspiration.

www.berkleepress.com/performance/new-standards/

Légère Reed exchange

Since the launch of its 'synthetic' reeds some years ago, Légère has found it difficult to persuade long-time cane users that the 'synthetic' product does have some very real advantages. Those players who have switched to Légère will tell you that they no longer have to change reeds on a regular basis, and that changes in humidity and temperature do not affect the reed in the same way as they would do with cane.

That said, Légère reeds do not come cheap, and this may also have been a factor in the reluctance of players to make the transition to the synthetic product. So Légère has come up with a failsafe and novel solution: a reed exchange. It's a free online service that players can use to swap their recently purchased Légère reed from a UK or Ireland retailer for a more suitable Légère reed if they find that their reed isn't quite right for them. The player submits an exchange request at **www.legere.com/exchanges**, and providing it meets the criteria outlined, they receive a replacement reed of their choice in the post. If ever there was a time to try the Légère product, then this has to be it, as it effectively makes your purchase risk-free.

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"Polly Gibbons is unmistakably a class act..."

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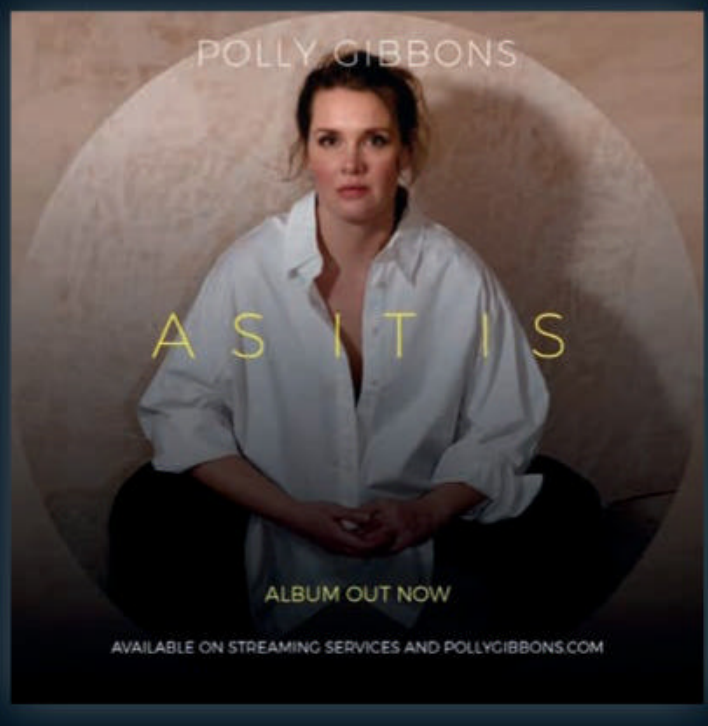

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Live Reviews

Left to right: Zakir Hussain, Ganesh Rajagopalan, Shankar Mahadeva, John McLaughlin and Selvaganesh Vinayakram.

Photos: Tatiana Gorilovsky

Shakti

The Eventim Apollo

The Summer of 1976 and Britain broils in its hottest season ever: the UK's barely been in the Common Market three years, Apartheid is entrenched, and England's cricketers are being roasted by the Windies of Holding and Richards. Meanwhile, up in the Gods of the then Hammersmith Odeon, a 16-year-old Gary Husband sits not believing his ears as he watches Shakti's first-ever UK gig. The world won't ever be the same.

And Husband's still awestruck. Okay, it's now the summer of 2023, even hotter than '76, the EU's a distant memory, and in a great turning of the wheel, there are giant screens in Piccadilly celebrating the Windrush generation. Forty-six years on from that first Shakti gig, Husband had just finished an opening set with guitarist Nguyên Lê supporting what is apparently the last Shakti incarnation. The first has become the last, a poignant moment, as Husband described it, his respect for John MacLaughlin, Zakir Hussain and their maestro colleagues most evident. It was a sentiment shared by the Eventim audience who gave Shakti a standing ovation before they'd even played a note.

But this wasn't a night of nostalgia. Shakti were here to play and play hard, with a new album to promote and a world tour stretching ahead. Old faves were re-born, like McLaughlin's elegiac dedication 'Zakir', while '5 In The Morning, 6 In The Afternoon' though familiar still thrilled in its labyrinthine lines and joy-felt precision.

Newer members like vocalist Shankar Mahadevan have brought a fresher texture to the band. 'The Voice' as Zakir described him (so forget Tom Jones) sways and gestures and leads the band in a dance that lifts them again. The call-and-response konnakol of new material like 'This Moment' was a stand-out among many. Likewise, the festive ensemble playing of Mahadevan's 'Bending the Rules' kept the audience enthralled.

Everything coalesced with the closing 'Finding the Way', which started with that ever-seductive theme from 'You Know, You Know' but climaxed with a percussion stand-off between Selvaganesh Vinayakram and Zakir Hussain that would have had Husband on cloud nine.

And another difference from 1976? This was an audience of predominantly Indian and south Asians, confident, owning it, nailing the night in joy. Where Husband once sat, three generations of saree'd women revelled. Daughter wore a Fitbit, mum surreptitiously filmed on her iPhone, grandmother leaned forward, rapt. The 'other' of 1976 has grown to be the 'us' of 2023. A world of difference. And better for it. Even the cricket's not that bad. **Andy Robson**

JazzStroud

Various Venues, Stroud, Gloucestershire

"This is my favourite festival," declared Get The Blessing's trumpeter Pete Judge as his duo JOW with cellist James Gowe began their set. "Stroud always punches above its weight." The atmospheric St Lawrence Church perfectly suited JOW's idiosyncratic combination of contemporary minimalism and early music. It also proved ideal for the Tryani Collective's highly original voice and percussion arrangements, a melange of styles evoking ritualistic chanting, plainsong and avant-garde choral ideas. And, inevitably, St Lawrence gave added weight to classic spiritual jazz from retro-futurist saxophonist Nat Burchill's Quintet. Rightly celebrated for his complete absorption into the sound worlds of John Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders, Birchall's languorous tone and lyrical sweep truly brought their flame to the festival.

But it was Bristol-based piano trio Yetii that truly galvanised the St Lawrence audience, capturing the kind of spellbound attention that is almost audible. Lyrical melodies like 'May The Wind' were supported by delicately insistent drumming from Alex Goodyear, pianist Alex Veitch unrolling a fine stream of consciousness improvisation and emotional expression. Ashley John Long's gymnastic bass solo was one of several flawless contributions to a set that received to an instant standing ovation.

Stroud's proximity to Bristol's thriving jazz world is a definite factor in the festival's success – JOW and Tryani Collective both hailing from the city, as do Hippo and Rwkus who each gave powerful performances in the more intimate and contemporary SVA bar. Fronted by Doug Cave's emphatic tenor sax, Hippo's music was a mash-up of electro-dance grooves, prog riffing and wilful imagination. The splendidly witty and wonky 'Clumsy' saw Henry Binning's slithering synth and crisp electric piano build up to a massive EDM style drop. Rwkus' similarly groove driven

sound had a more disciplined 'production' sound, closely written harmonised themes sweeping in and out of focus. 'Fluting' was more a suite than a tune, superfast unison of trumpet, sax and keys pulling back to a smooth groove, soaring samba trumpet giving way to chilled sax.

Stroud itself provided a couple of distinctive acts in the SVA, with the enjoyably groovy tumult of Earl Temple Foundation's self-styled 'juzzpank' sound recalling the 1980s exuberance of bands like Working Week. By contrast, the hyper-contemporary sounds of Unfurl combined trumpeter Rowan Porteous with the complex electronica and FX bass guitar of Mike Forrest Flynn. Hints of dub and grime beats surfaced while Porteous' deft improvisations steered nimbly through the electrobustle.

Vocalist China Bowls recently left Bristol to develop her solo work in London – a timely move, to judge by her soulful SVA set showcasing poetically economic lyrics and deft guitar, sensitively supported by Mei Kirby's keyboards and Lya Guerrero's drumming. The smaller space might have suited Laura Misch's more delicate electronica and vocal mix better than the festival's big venue: the looming Victorian Goods Shed. However, her studio-precise sonics definitely benefitted from D&B Audio's excellent bespoke surround sound system, and Sunday's 'in the round' arrangement allowed a big crowd to huddle closer.

The Goods Shed came into its own for the biggest sounds, starting with the 10-strong TC & The Groove Family. Celebrating drummer/bandleader T(im) C(ook)'s birthday, they delivered a remorselessly upbeat blend of Afrobeat, funk and jazz grooves. Solid bursts of danceable ensemble playing was relieved by virtuoso solo interludes – Grifton Forbes-Amos mercurial trumpet and Hannah Mae-Birtwell's roistering baritone stood out – that wrung out a packed and lively crowd. The same formula worked for Colectiva's powerhouse Afro-Latin set the following night: absolutely lock-tight rhythm based on a flawless percussion section with superb individual embellishments from Viva Msimang's trombone among many others. The collective musicianship of both bands was undeniable.

Stroud stars (clockwise from left): Colectiva; Sarathy Korwar; TC & Groove Family

Sarathy Korwar's modest-seeming quartet of two drummers and two keyboard players produced a collective sound that was as powerful as those prior stage-fillers, however, manipulating the tropes of Indian classical and folk traditions into the structures of contemporary dance music.

Thus, the evolutionary melodic improvisations of raga became meandering abstract electronica, while the thunderous loping grooves of Dhol drumming gained a hardcore edge. Played in the round in semi-darkness, with a backdrop of flickering film loops, there was an almost ceremonial intensity to the event, only interrupted by waves of delighted applause. Then, after Korwar's seismic onslaught, the imaginatively quirky electro-acoustic whimsy of Church Andrews and Matt Davies proved a satisfyingly original digestif to close a feast of a weekend.

Having attended the festival over recent years, it has been impressive to watch it grow both as a magnet for music lovers and a highlight of the local calendar, finding wider audiences with an encouraging presence of younger people. Pete Judge was certainly right: for a small Gloucestershire town Stroud certainly punches well above its weight.

Tony Benjamin

Photos: Tony Benjamin / Fran Cox

My Iris with Dave Douglas

The 606, London

How the world turns! It's just a year since Trish Clowes and My Iris released *A View with a Room* on Greenleaf, esteemed US trumpeter Dave Douglas' label. That album was largely born from lockdown isolation and uncertainty. But now, here in flesh and blood, were those key players – joined together for the first time, trading choruses as though sprung from the same jazz womb.

And there was a third spirit present at the crowded, expectant 606, a spirit deeply embedded in the jazz reality of Clowes and Douglas. Wayne Shorter died just six weeks previously, and extraordinarily Douglas had with him a previously unheard Shorter piece. 'Destination Unknown' opened the second set, thoughtful, inevitably enigmatic. But with the sound now better balanced (Douglas had somewhat swamped Clowes in the first half), the saxophonist was in her element, all pocket battleship one moment, the next bubbling up laughter from her horn. Clowes admits to an almost religious connection to Shorter. The sax man once said jazz meant "I dare you", and Clowes did just that, daring Douglas to go further and freer. And that included the band too: Joel Barford's drums were a mini-revelation, while Chris Montague's guitar could lay it down as on 'Into the Air', while Ross Stanley swung from rock solid comping to rhapsodic piano soloing on the turn of a bar.

But, as if lasered to a tractor beam, the attention always came back to the galvanised Douglas and Clowes. She beamed ecstatic watching Douglas strut it out on her song 'Amber', but equally owned the stage with her own urging roar. This was a very different Clowes from the one you may catch fronting a string quartet at the Wigmore Hall. This was sweatsome, sensual, seat of the pants stuff.

"This music, it's dealing with the unexpected," Shorter once said. "No one really knows how to deal with the unexpected. How do you rehearse the unknown?"

I guess you don't, you just do it. And it was a lucky audience that witnessed Trish Clowes, Dave Douglas and the awesome My Iris doing dares the Wayne way. **Andy Robson**

Gig Guide August 2023

Rosie Hanley previews the must-see gigs and concerts. Send future listings to **roseanne.hanley@gmail.com**

All listings are run free but due to space restrictions cannot be guaranteed to appear – expanded gig listings can be found at **www.jazzwise.com/gig-guide**

Sun Ra Arkestra: The Forge, London, 10-11 August

Photo: Ben Houdijk

TUESDAY

1 Nicky Schrire Quintet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

1 Ruby Turner
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

1 Rob Barron Trio
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

1 Dan Reinstein
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

1 Alex Wilson Trio
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY

2 Wild Card
Upstairs at Ronnie's, Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

2 Paul Edis Trio
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

2-3 Reuben James
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

2-3 Roy Ayers
Boisdale of Canary Wharf, 1 Cabot Square, London E14

2 Jackson Mathod
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

2 Assembly Trio
Jazz at the Lescar, 303 Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield

2 The Sam Every Big Band
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

2 Pete Allen Jazz Band
The Conservative Club, Radway Place, Sidmouth

2 Emily Brown
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

THURSDAY

3 Gaz Hughes Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

3 Sophie Alloway Quartet
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

3 Alec Harper Quartet
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

3 Dan Forshaw Sextet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

3 Mark Crook's Organ Quartet
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY

4 Heavy Beat Brass
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

4 Shakatak
Swansea Jazz Club, the Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea

4 Gary Crosby Quartet
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
Bassist Gary Crosby OBE leads his quartet of drummer Eddie Hicks, pianist Luke Bacchus and trumpeter Mark Kavuma to celebrate Jamaican Independence Day.

4 Orchestra Mambo
The Forge, 3-7 Delaney Street, Camden, London NW1

4-5 Courtney Pine
Jazz Cafe, 5 Parkway, Camden, London NW1

4 Aydenne Simone and The Big Mama Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

4-5 Light of the World
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

4 Freddie Benedict
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY

5 Hamish McGregor's Jazz Band
St Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington

5 Sambroso Allstars
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

5 Neil Angilley Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

5 Louise Dodds and Elchin Shirinov
St Vincent's Chapel, Edinburgh

5 John Williamson and Immy Churchill
Saltburn Community Hall, Albion Terrace, Saltburn-by-the-sea

5 Battersea Jazz Festival: Fraser Urquhart
World Heart Beat, Embassy Gardens, 3 Ponton Road, London SW11

SUNDAY

6 Pete Allen Jazz Band
The Bacon Arms, Oxford Street, Newbury

6 Natalie Williams Soul Family
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

6 Rosa Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

6 Imogen Ryall
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

6 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

6-20 Brecon Jazz Festival: Zoe Rahman, Emma Rawicz, Gary Crosby and more
Various venues, Brecon

6 Ben Crosland Quartet
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

6 Central Bar Quintet
Central Bar, Half Moon Lane, Gateshead

6 BSJF: Social London Orchestra presents Scheherajazz
The Clapham Grand, Saint John's Hill, London SW11

6 Anita Wardell
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

6 Manouche North
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

MONDAY

7-11 B:JazzFest: Romarna Campbell, Arun Ghosh, Charlotte Keeffe and more
B:music, Broad Street, Birmingham

TUESDAY

8 Derek Nash with Noel McCalla
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking
8 Harry Keeble Quartet
Forum Music Centre, Borough Road, Darlington
8 Joanna Eden
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
8 Norman Willmore
The Flute and Tankard, 4 Windsor Place, Cardiff
8 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
8 Sean Fyfe
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
8 Tom Barford Quintet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY

9 Bryan Corbett
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
9 OK Aurora
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
9 Mama Terra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
9 Simon Spillett and Pete Long
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester

THURSDAY

10 Nik Bärtsch's Ronin
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
10-11 The Sun Ra Arkestra
The Forge, 3-7 Delaney Street, Camden, London NW1
Alto saxophonist and Sun Ra collaborator Marshall Allen – now aged 99 – leads the Sun Ra Arkestra to continue the legacy of the legendary jazz innovator.
10 Tara Minton
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
10-14 We Out Here: Ezra Collective, Meshell Ndegeocello, Nubya Garcia and more
Wimborne St Giles, Dorset
10 Bare Bones with Dennis Rollins
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
10 The Filthy Six
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

FRIDAY

11 Nik Bärtsch's Ronin
Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester
11 Carmen Lundy
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
11 Jeremy Sassoon
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

Courtney Pine: Jazz Cafe, London, 4-5 August

11 Jon Onabowu
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
11-12 Paul Brown
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
11 Amy Bird
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY

12 Quintet Blue
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
12 Pershore Jazz on a Summer's Day
No.8 Arts Centre, 8 High Street, Pershore
12 Wendy Kirkland
Derby Jazz, Memorial Gardens, Belper
12 Melanie Charles
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
12-13 For The Love of Jazz Festival
Jubilee Square, Leicester
12 Pete Latanka
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
12 Brandon Allen Quartet
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY

13 Rory Ingham's Trombone Assembly
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
13 Edgar Macias Quintet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
13 Wendy Kirkland
Derby Jazz, Chester Green, Derby
13 Jan Spencelayh Quartet
St James' & St Basil's Church, Fenham Hall Drive, Newcastle upon Tyne
13 Some Kinda Wonderful
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
13 Ros Lewis Tailgaters
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

MONDAY

14 JD Allen and Sebastian Chames Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
14-15 Soil & "Pimp" Sessions
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
14 Ed Bentley Trio
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

15 The Art Themen Organ Trio
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
15 Lulu Pierre Quartet
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
15 Gary Crosby Quartet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
15 Alex Voysey Band
Fougou Band, Torbay, Preston Conservative Club, 299 Torquay Road, Paignton
15 Ese & The Vooduu People
Pizza Express Live!, 99 High Holborn, London WC1
The London-based floating collective, founded and led by singer-guitarist-songwriter Ese Okorodudu, and which mixes jazz, soul and African elements with rock improvisation, will be presenting a two-set performance entitled 'Jazz Is What We Say it Is!', ahead of the release of a new jazz-flavoured mini-album later this year. As well as Ese, tonight's show will feature Jackson Baird (keyboards), Indigo Pearce (bass), Mawulikplimi Dossavi (percussion), Kissangwa Mbouta (drums, vocals) and Sheena Ross (vocals). Okorodudu advises: "expect the unexpected, and maybe even a few special guests. Anything could happen!"

WEDNESDAY

16 Tingvall Trio
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
16 Eternal Triangle
Cafe OTO, 18-22 Ashwin Street, London E8
16 Soil & "Pimp" Sessions
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
16-20 Newcastle Jazz Festival: Jonny Mansfield, Nigel Price Trio, Alex Clarke and more
Various venues, Newcastle
16 Eliot Richards
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

Meshell Ndegeocello: We Out Here Festival, Wimbourne, Dorset, 10-14 August

Photo: Julian Ramirez

THURSDAY

17-19 Luminescence – Tommy Smith and Maria Rud
St Giles' Cathedral, High Street, Edinburgh
17 Andy Panayi Quartet
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
17 London Django Collective
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
17-19 The James Taylor Quartet
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
17 Bryan Corbett
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
17 Snake Davis with Bop 3
St John's Hall, Snods Edge, Shotley Bridge
17 Duncan Eagles
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

Airshots
August 23 Radio

Branford Marsalis

BBC RADIO 2 88-91 FM and DAB
Big Band Special (Mon, 11pm),
Jamie Cullum show (Tues, 9pm)

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM and DAB
J to Z (Sat 5pm)

Pianist Rebecca Nash live in session, plus Joe Chamber's inspirations (15 July)

US sax star Branford Marsalis joins Julian Joseph for an exclusive session for J-to-Z (22 July)

Jazz supergroup ARTEMIS live in session, plus Franco-Syrian flutist Naïssam Jalal's inspirations (29 July)

The best in jazz – past, present and future (5 August)

The best in jazz – past, present and future (12 August)

We Out Here festival highlights (19 August)

The best in jazz – past, present and future (26 August)

Jazz Record Requests (Sun, 4pm)

Freeness with Corey Mwamba (Sat, Midnight)

BBC RADIO 6 MUSIC DAB

Gilles Peterson, Sat 3pm

JAZZ FM DAB, Sky, Alexa, smartphone, tablet and online at jazzfm.com
(Mon – Fri) 6am-6.30am Business Breakfast, 6.30am-10am Jazz FM Breakfast with Nigel Williams, 10am-2pm Midmornings with Danielle Perrys, 2pm-6pm Afternoons with Jamie Crick, 6pm-7pm Jazz FM's Greatest with Mark Walker, 7pm-9pm Dinner Jazz with Mark Walker. (Mon) 9pm-10pm The Performance Series with Ruth Fisher, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Tues) 9pm-10pm Jazz Travels with Sarah Ward, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Weds) . 9pm-10pm The Big Easy with Lil' Koko. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Thurs) 9pm-10pm True Brit with Helen Mayhew. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Fri) 9pm-10pm The Ronnie Scott's Radio Show with Ian Shaw. 10pm-1am Late Night Jazz with Helen Mayhew. (Sat) 6am-9am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 9am-10am Winter Book Club, 10am-2pm Nigel Williams Saturday Show, 2pm-6pm YolanDa Brown on Saturday, 6pm-9pm The Sarah Ward Collection, 9pm-10pm Jazz FM Voices, 10pm-1am The Blueprint with Chris Philips. (Sun) 6am-10am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 10am-1pm Tony Minvielle, 1-3pm Robbie Vincent, 3pm-5pm Sunday Afternoons with John Osborne, 5-7pm Blues and Boogie with David Freeman, 7pm-9pm Clare Teal Big Band Jazz; 9pm Sunday Discovery and 10pm-1am Somethin' Else with Jez Nelson.

ONLINE AND PODCASTS
Courtney Pine's Global Podcast at www.jazz-pod.com
www.soulandjazz.com – Mike Chadwick bi-weekly show; Tony Minvielle, first and third Wednesdays each month; Jazz On The Beach with Adam Sieff, every Wednesday from 10.00pm - 12.00 midnight on DealRadio.co.uk; the 606 Club Straight Ahead Show with Dave Lewis, every Wednesday at 10pm.
Richard Heath's Alt 2 Show www.radio.lsu.co.uk (9-11pm Thurs); www.mykindamusic24.com – the Jazz Cavern, Thur 9pm
Dave Self's Sounds of Jazz (4-5pm Tues) www.tunein.com/radio/Blast-1386-s6837/
www.jazzlondonradio.com
www.cosmicjazz.co.uk with Derek Merrill
www.careradio.org - Alan Steadman's Jazz Waves Sun 11pm and repeated.

REGIONAL RADIO ENGLAND
World Beats, Kane 103.7 FM www.kanefm.com (Thurs, 11am); The Jazz Show, 99.2 Hermitage FM with Peter Varden (Weds, 6pm) on 99.2 FM in north west Leicestershire area and online at www.hermitagefm.com; Jazz Kaleidoscope with Alan Musson on 102.5FM in the Southern Black Country and online at www.thebridgeradio.net (Mon, 9pm); Slipstreem Worldwide Beats, RadioReverb 97.2 FM in Brighton and radioreverb.com (11am Sunday); Late Night Jazz with Colin Dickenson, Witney Radio 99.9-107.9 FM (Thurs, 10pm)

WALES Radio Cardiff 98.7 FM, Humie Webbe's Jazz Train (Sun, 10am) and Late Night Jazz (Thurs 10-11pm) on www.witney.radio.

SCOTLAND BBC Radio Scotland 92.4-94.7 FM The Jazz Nights with Seonaid Aitken (Sun, 7pm)

NORTHERN IRELAND BBC Radio Ulster 92-95 FM Walter Love (Sun, 7pm)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND RTÉ John Kelly's Mystery Train, RTE Lyric FM (Sun-Thurs, 7-9pm); Brian Priestley's That's Jazz, Radio Kerry (Weds, 9-10pm and podcast).

Ese & The Vooduu People: Pizza Express Live! Holborn, 15 August

Photo: Carl Russ-Mohl

FRIDAY
18 TRYPL
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
18 Alice Grace and Pawel Jedrzejewski
Lit & Phil, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne

SATURDAY
19 Malcolm Strachan Sextet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
19 Five-Way Split
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY
20 Jeff Hewer Quartet
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds
20 The Cadillac Kings (evening) Eddie Gripper (afternoon)
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
20 Ronnie Scott's Blues Explosion
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
20 Tyne Valley Big Band
Royal Quays Marina, Albert Edward Dock, Coble Dene, South Shields
20 Pat McCarthy Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
20 Wayne Hernandez
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
20 The Jake Leg Jug Band
Plymouth Jazz Club, The Royal British Legion Club, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth

MONDAY
21-24 Natalie Williams Soul Family: A Philly Soul Summer Festival
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
21 Sister Sally
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

TUESDAY
22 Tori Freestone
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
Part of the 'Out To Lunch' series at Cadogan Hall, powerful and melodic saxophonist Tori Freestone lines up with drummer Tim Giles and double bassist Dave Manington.
22 Sounds of Adderley
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
22 Alison Rayner Quintet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY
23 Five-Way Split
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester
23-28 Scott Hamilton Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
23 Tara Minton
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

THURSDAY
24 Quartet Con Alma
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
24 - 28 Rye International Jazz & Blues Festival: Laura Mvula, Ruby Turner, Joe Stilgoe and more
Various venues, Rye
24 Paul Higgs
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
24 Reiss Ellis Beckles Group
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

FRIDAY
25-26 The Leo Green Experience
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
25 Nick Costley-White Trio
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
25 Me & Mr Jones Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
25 Samara
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY
26 Nick Costley-White Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
26 Louise Dodds and Elchin Shirinov
St Vincent's Chapel, Edinburgh
26 Bruce Adams with Alan Barnes
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY
27 W3 Funk Sessions
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
27 Mark Williams Trio
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

MONDAY
28 Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
28 Ferg Kilsby Quartet
Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Beaumont Street, Hexham

TUESDAY
29-30 Goldie 'Live'
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
29-31 Bude Jazz Festival
Bude, Cornwall
29-31 Mario Biondo
The Forge, 3-7 Delaney Street, Camden, London NW1
29 Brandon Allen Quartet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY
30 Darius Brubeck Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
30 Tim Garland and Jason Rebello
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
Two of the biggest names in Brit-jazz (multi-reedist Garland and pianist Rebello) appear here to perform songs from their stunning recent duo album, Life To Life.

THURSDAY
31 Moonlight Serenade Orchestra
Customs House, Mill Dam, South Shields
31 Ian Shaw 'Greek Street Friday'
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
31 Tony Kofi's Tenor Legacy
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

Emma Rawicz: Brecon Jazz festival, 6-20 August

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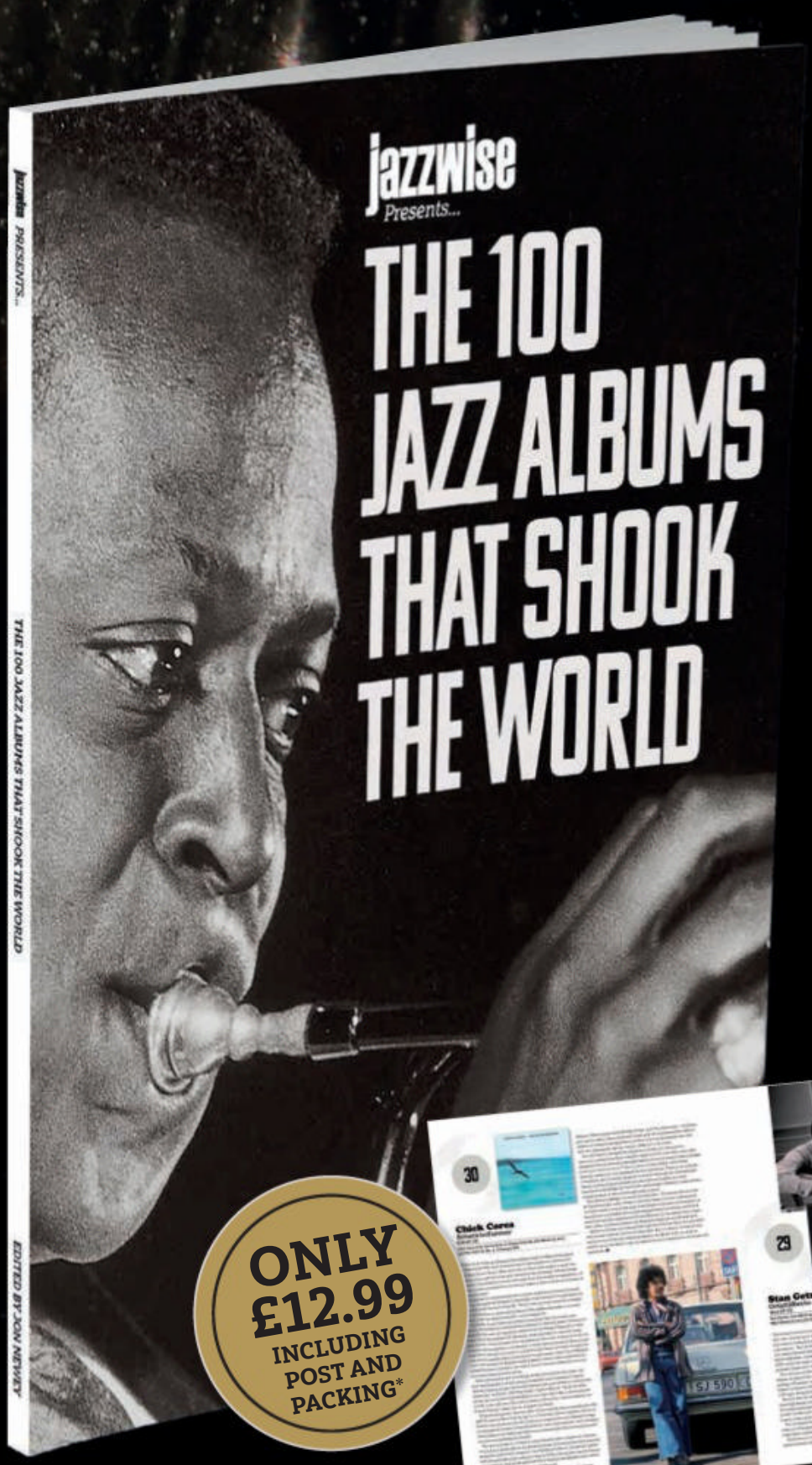

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Letters

Write in to us here at Letters Dept, Jazzwise Magazine, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or email letters@jazzwise.com

Scottish jazz: A reality check

Mike Flynn may have been wearing his rose-tinted spectacles when he wrote his July Editor's Note.

He is right to praise Creative Scotland for its commitment to Scottish jazz, but to infer from that a more joined-up approach in Scotland to jazz and culture is stretching it. Holyrood has seen a succession of Culture Secretaries and Ministers come and go, few of whom showed any knowledge of jazz. Public expenditure cuts over decades have undermined local authority funding for jazz venues and events, no doubt mirroring the rest of the UK.

A report of a study into the Scottish jazz and blues scene carried out by Napier University in Edinburgh is due for publication soon. It reveals the reality of a fragmented, under-funded scene with a few large and important foundations, but many weaknesses. There are of course bright spots – the heroic efforts of Tommy Smith at the Conservatoire and the SNJO, the international scope of the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, for instance – and jazz musicians themselves continue, as they have always done, to find ways to get their music out there. Beyond that, is a patchwork of small venues and promoters struggling on with shoestring budgets.

The resurgence of interest in jazz in the UK appears to be largely a big city phenomenon; in smaller towns and rural areas, the music clings on precariously. It has not helped that BBC Scotland has been part of the BBC's vicious cutting of "specialist" music output (in direct contravention of its Charter obligations to cover artforms which other broadcasters ignore). BBC Radio Scotland's excellent *Jazz Nights* has gone, leaving minimal coverage of the Scottish jazz scene in our own media. The same fate has befallen the wonderful Linley Hamilton on Radio Ulster, and quite possibly other UK regional programmes.

The UK/Scottish jazz scenes may look encouragingly healthy to journalists in London, but the reality beyond the M25 is a little different.

Blair Melville, Langtoun Jazz, Kirkcaldy, via email

EDITOR'S REPLY:

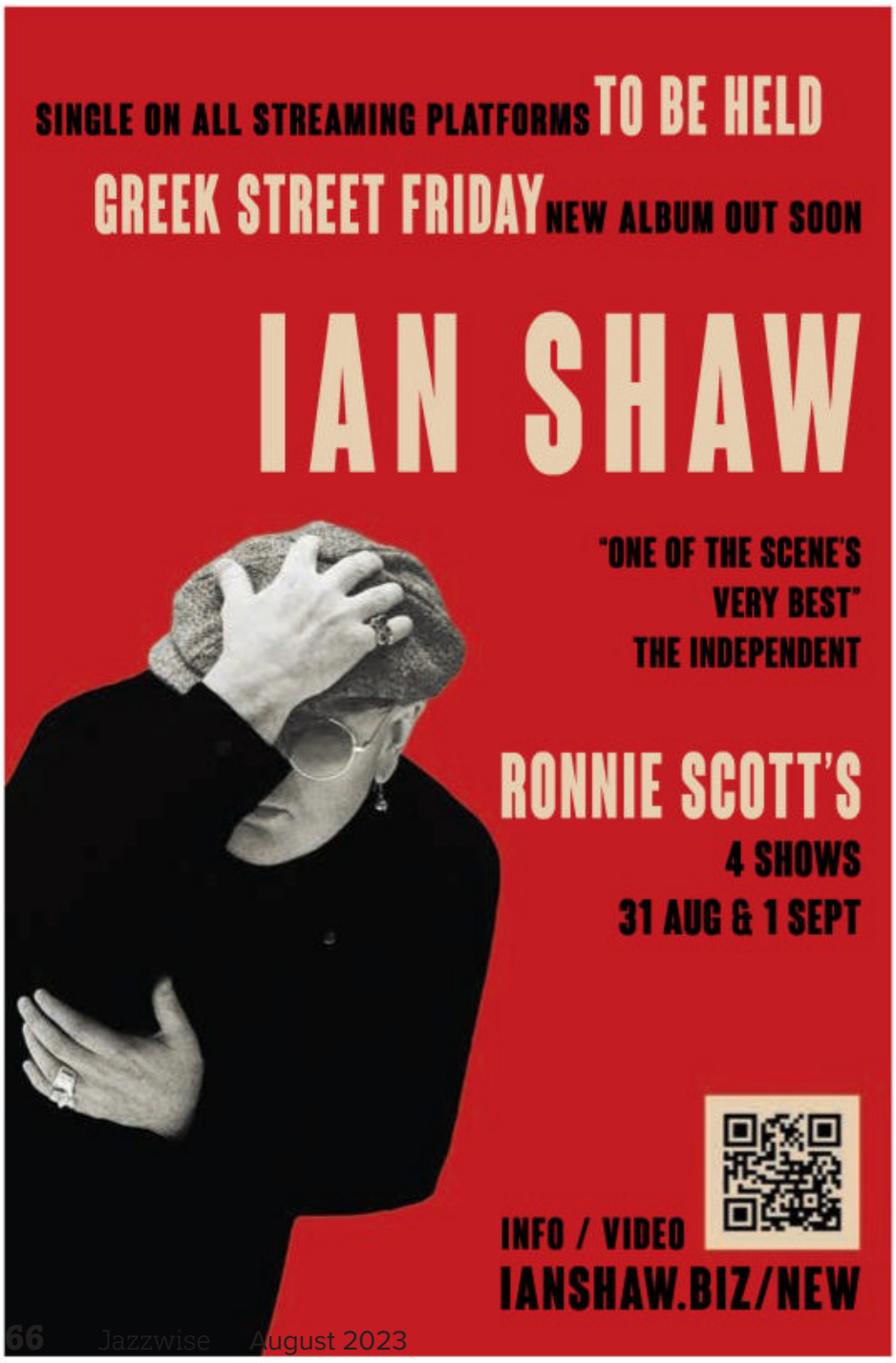
Thanks for your eloquent and detailed letter Blair. I've certainly not got rose-tinted glasses at all – and as I now live in Gloucestershire, have a very good idea of just how stretched local resources are (yes, there really are no NHS dentists for many adults any more!) – and it's down to the heroism of mostly volunteers that any kind of culture happens outside of the big UK cities.

My original point of that editorial was to highlight just how lacking cultural support is for the entire UK – and while I appreciate that Scotland's presence at Jazzahead! is not a fair reflection of the realities on the ground – at least there is some form of delegation out there representing Scotland, which given the relative success of some UK jazz acts in recent years, is yet another missed opportunity for homegrown talent.

Heroic efforts: Tommy Smith

I also agree that the cuts to jazz radio, whatever their motives, are shameful – so much for public service broadcasting.

The irony of all this funding disappearing is that audiences remain committed and passionate about culture; and unlike so much else in the world right now, music has the power to not just generate income and stimulate business, but bring people together and provide a brighter alternative to the relentless doom and gloom – hopefully we agree on that. **Mike Flynn**



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